

THE CRITICAL ELEMENT OF DISCIPLING  
FOR SHORT-TERM MISSION TEAMS

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## DEDICATION

To a congregation  
beloved and called by God  
to communion and mission:  
Faith Presbyterian Church, Tallahassee

## CONTENTS

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Acknowledgements  | v   |
| Abstract  | vi  |
| <br>  |     |
| 1. A THEOLOGY OF CHRISTIAN VOCATION IN DISCIPLESHIP<br>AND MISSION                              | 1   |
| <br>  |     |
| 2. THE PROBLEM OF SELF-CENTERED “MISSION” AND<br>THE NEED FOR ORIENTATION TO CHRIST             | 33  |
| <br>  |     |
| 3. A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE   | 64  |
| <br>  |     |
| 4. PROJECT DESIGN: MISSION TEAMS AS DISCIPLESHIP<br>GROUPS                                      | 130 |
| <br>  |     |
| 5. OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE  | 155 |
| <br>  |     |
| APPENDIX A – TWO SAMPLE PROGRAMS FOR GROUP<br>ORIENTATION INCLUDING DISCIPLESHIP ACTIVITIES     | 161 |
| <br>  |     |
| APPENDIX B -SURVEY OF SHORT-TERM MISSIONERS WHOSE<br>ORIENTATION INCLUDED DISCIPLING            | 178 |
| <br>  |     |
| APPENDIX C - A PROGRAM OF ORIENTATION WITH DISCIPLING<br>ELEMENTS FOR SHORT-TERM MISSION TEAMS  | 187 |
| <br>  |     |
| APPENDIX D - SYLLABUS FOR A SEMINARY COURSE IN<br>PLANNING AND LEADING SHORT-TERM MISSION TEAMS | 276 |
| <br>  |     |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY  | 283 |
| <br>  |     |
| VITA  | 288 |

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## ABSTRACT

Over the past two generations the short-term missions movement has grown exponentially. The movement presents both possibilities and problems in terms of impact in the home congregation and in the community of service. Some of the problems may be tied to mission endeavors that are taken up in the interests of the self rather than the interests of Christ. Discipling for short-term mission team members that orients them in regard to their identity in Christ is proposed as essential for effective mission. A program for small group discipleship is presented, built around nine disciplines that were identified over four years of short-term missions in a Presbyterian congregation: worship, vocation, prayer, kingdom-consciousness, kinship, witness, dependency, service and stewardship. Short-term mission team members who had participated in orientation completed evaluations regarding the effect of such a discipleship program. Overall they strongly agreed that their experience of orientation and practice of mission had a lasting, formative, positive and spiritual impact upon them in the areas identified.

## CHAPTER 1

### A THEOLOGY OF CHRISTIAN VOCATION IN DISCIPLESHIP AND MISSION

#### **A God of Communion and Mission**

“Creation is grace,” Karl Barth said, marveling not that God exists, but that something distinct from God should exist by God’s will.<sup>1</sup> That a self-sufficient deity would desire anything else to be is a wonder, and even in this point alone God is worthy of worship. To be God’s creature is not just to owe God gratitude for coexistence, but to know something about this God. God is relational, glorified and pleased by the creation that exists in relationship with him. “It is good,” God thought of each day of creation, and “very good” of the creation of humanity. Not only the fact of creation, but also the authorship of creation, reveals something of this God’s relational being.<sup>2</sup> The gospel of John describes a God who is one in three persons, a unity and community of three, a Trinity whose persons are active not just throughout history redeeming creation, but even in the beginning, creating: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1959), 54.

<sup>2</sup> See Sherron George’s description of the partnership of the Trinity in creation and mission in the first two chapters of *Called As Partners in Christ’s Service: The Practice of God’s Mission* (Louisville, Kentucky: Geneva Press, 2004), 1-24.

through him, and without him not one thing came into being.”(John 1:1-3).<sup>3</sup> And so a Trinitarian God created a world, and within that world a humanity with whom also to enjoy a special relationship: “Let us make humankind in our image...”

Creation speaks not just of God’s relational nature, but also of God’s loving nature. That love is seen in God’s cherishing of creation and claiming of humanity, and that love is cast in deep relief against humanity’s fall into sin and death. Sin was (and is) the idolatry of humanity choosing self over God, and in doing so breaking a holy communion, becoming separated from a holy God: “...your iniquities have been barriers between you and your God...”(Isaiah 59:1-2). Sin was an offense to God’s holiness, but sin was at the same time an offense to God’s love, for it severed the relationship for which God had created the beloved. And so God’s loving nature was yet more fully revealed when this God of communion also was seen to be a God of mission, seeking to save, to redeem, to restore his creation to himself: “God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him.” (I John 4:9)

The mission of God as seen throughout the Bible and still active today can be characterized as movements of sending and gathering. These movements correspond to God’s nature as missional and communal for the sake of his glory and the satisfaction of his love. In the past few generations mission has been described as either centripetal or

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<sup>3</sup> The Scriptures quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and are used by permission. All rights reserved.



centrifugal.<sup>4</sup> A centripetal example of mission would be that of the mission given to Israel, in that Israel would so reflect the glory of the Lord in the view of the nations that those nations would be drawn in to praise and worship the Lord. While mission has at times been centripetal, the favored understanding of God's mission in general is that of being centrifugal. God is even said to be centrifugal – a sending God, a missionary God.<sup>5</sup> The operative word in many theologies of mission is *sending* and those studies include consideration of the sent church being the work of a sending God:

Since the nature of the Christian mission derives from the nature of God, mission is not an adjunct of ecclesiology. 'Mission is no more a department or derivative of the Church than are the concepts of grace and mercy and forgiveness. Mission is central to theology because it springs out of the character of God. It is not the consequence of a command but the outgoing expression of a Divine Love. It is rooted in the doctrine of the Trinity, not in the doctrine of the Church....God is a sending God, engaged in a sending economy.'<sup>6</sup>

Alongside lengthy theologies of the sending action of God and the missional nature of God, that which is expressed in the sending - the loving and communal nature of God - is often basically represented or assumed. Yet this foundation and end deserves full consideration, for God is a missionary God because God is a relational God: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son..." The creation that God willed to exist alongside himself is to be redeemed and renewed in restored relationship. The

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<sup>4</sup> The discussion that follows on the centripetal and centrifugal manifestations of mission are informed by J. G. Davies, *Worship and Mission* (New York: Association Press, 1967).

<sup>5</sup> John Stott (*Christian Mission in the Modern World*, p. 21) credits Johannes Blauw in *The Missionary Nature of the Church* (McGraw-Hill, 1962) as first using the word "centrifugal" regarding the mission of the church, followed by J.G. Davies using the term of God in *Worship and Mission*.

<sup>6</sup>D. Webster, Should our Image of Mission Go?, Prism Pamphlets, No. 15 (n.d.), pp. 4f. Quoted in Davies, 31.

grace evident in God's mission is the grace manifest in creation. Communion existed before mission, and will exist after mission:

There was no "mission" in the Garden of Eden and there will be no "mission" in the new heavens and the new earth (though the results will be evident). From the first glimmer of the gospel in Genesis 3:15 to the end of this age, however, mission is necessitated by humanity's fall into sin and need for a Saviour, and is made possible only by the saving initiative of God in Christ.<sup>7</sup>

In important part God's sending is to the end of reconciliation and communion.

"In part" because God is to be worshiped and glorified by creation. John Piper is right in saying, "Mission exists because worship doesn't."<sup>8</sup> The catechism teaches truly that the chief end of humanity is "to glorify God and enjoy him forever." God is glorified, however, and enjoyed, by God's people when they worship in redeemed relationship. Among other qualities, God's compassion, condescension, and gracious love for humanity glorify God.<sup>9</sup> Therefore it is well to understand God's mission as sending for the sake of gathering, reaching out to draw in – in love. The history of God's mission may be read as such waves: prophets sent that a people might turn back to God; one nation elected that all nations might come to the house of the Lord; a Savior sent to call people into kingdom life; a Spirit sent to adopt; a church sent to call the nations to discipleship.

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<sup>7</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 251.

<sup>8</sup> John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Mission* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1993), 11.

<sup>9</sup> John 17:1-3: "After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent'."

### **A People Blessed to Be a Blessing**

In the calling of Abram and the election of Israel, God began blessing and sending for the sake of gathering in:

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.” (Genesis 12:1-3)

Israel was to be God’s own possession, enjoying covenant relationship with God: “I will take you as my people, and I will be your God.” (Exodus 6:7) The relationship with Israel would not alone fully glorify God nor satisfy God’s love; it is a particular relationship but not exclusive, for it was intended to be one with all creation in sight. It can be argued that the sole responsibility that Israel bore in mission as depicted in the Old Testament was to live faithfully in covenant with her God and thereby reflect the glory of the Lord to the surrounding nations. The prophets, especially Isaiah, are filled with references to people being drawn to Israel, or the nations brought to Jerusalem, and hence to the God of Israel. Even so Israel’s mission was not self-centered, or at least God did not intend it to be, though Israel often failed to understand God’s broader interests addressed in this particular blessing. The light the Jews were to bear was for the benefit of all nations, that they might come to worship the one true God. “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.” (Isaiah 49:6)

The nations were not intended to remain a peripheral group of onlookers, but there would be an ingathering, incorporating, ingrafting into the covenant community of God's people. This is present in the historical books (the blessing of the nations as a sharing in the blessing of Abraham) and explicit in the prophets and psalms. Psalm 87 describes that Zion will have recorded among those "born in it" Rahab and Babylon, Philistia, Tyre and Ethiopia. Even former enemies of Israel will have amended birth certificates showing citizenship in the city of God. The portrait of the nations being gathered up with Israel is especially vivid in Isaiah 66:

For I know their works and their thoughts, and I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory, and I will set a sign among them. From them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Put, and Lud – which draw the bow – to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations. They shall bring all your kindred from all the nations as an offering to the Lord, on horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and on mules, and on dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the Lord, just as the Israelites bring a grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the Lord. And I will also take some of them as priests and as Levites, says the Lord.

For as the news heavens and the new earth,  
which I will make,  
shall remain before me, says the Lord,  
so shall your descendants and your name remain.  
From new moon to new moon,  
and from sabbath to sabbath,  
all flesh shall come to worship before me,  
says the Lord. (18-23)

### **The Failure and Fulfillment of Israel's Mission**

The history of the Old Testament includes the history of the nation of Israel breaking covenant with her God, and so also failing to fulfill her mission of being a light and a priest to the nations. Eventually God sends Israel and Judah into exile by the hand

of enemy nations. Many of the Jews would remain dispersed among the nations to whom they were to bear witness, but some made their way home and rebuilt the temple. It became clear that the ingathering from all of creation would not happen by the nation of Israel. Köstenberger and O'Brien, reflecting on the passages in Isaiah where the nations are depicted coming to Jerusalem and Yahweh, observe, "Significantly, this ingathering of Gentiles is depicted as an eschatological event, effected by God, not Israel."<sup>10</sup> They refer especially to Isaiah 45:22: "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other." God alone would be Savior. Israel would fail in her mission with a most important exception - producing the Messiah. In God's sending of the Messiah to and through Israel, a faithful Light would shine that would not be overcome, and a Priest would serve who would make a once-for-all sacrifice, atoning for sin and opening the way for all to God.

### **God Sends the Son for the World**

In Jesus appeared the promised and long-anticipated Messiah, through and in whom the mission of God – the mission to and through Israel - would be carried out victoriously. God would be praised in the glorious salvation of his people Israel - and the world. Holding the baby Jesus in the temple, Simeon sang,

Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,  
according to your word;  
for my eyes have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,  
a light for revelation to the Gentiles  
and for the glory to your people Israel. (Luke 2:29-32)

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<sup>10</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien, 253.

Jesus' mission was directed first to the Jews as God's chosen people, and most of his earthly ministry focused on them. Jesus' ministry, however, included signs and teaching that the gates of the kingdom would be thrown open imminently and radically to the Gentiles. When Jesus taught in the synagogue in Nazareth near the beginning of his public ministry, he impressed the Jewish people by reading from the prophet Isaiah:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

He then went on to say, "Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:18-21) Here he proclaimed himself the inaugurator of the kingdom of God, the fulfillment of the promises for liberation and healing and salvation. His proclamation, however, was not restricted to the deliverance of Israel, for in reading from the prophet he omitted the promise of "the day of vengeance of our God..." He then proceeded to speak of non-Jews who had received help from the Lord in the days of Elijah and Elisha. The Jews became so enraged by this consideration for the Gentiles that they attempted to kill Jesus by throwing him off of a cliff.

Not only Jesus' announcement of the kingdom but also the accompanying works and signs recorded in the gospels point to a universal mission. Those signs of inclusion for the Gentiles were extraordinary not just in occurrence but in meaning. When a centurion sent an appeal through Jewish elders for Jesus to heal a critically ill servant, and expressed confidence that Jesus' authority was such that he could do so even from afar, Jesus responded, "'I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith.' When

those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.”

(Luke 7:9-10) And so even Jesus’ early ministry, though directed primarily to the Jews, included dramatic signs that God was reaching out to those on the margins to draw them into the kingdom.

The inauguration of the kingdom of God was and is not just an announcement of universal significance, it is also invitation. The invitation is to the kingdom and the kingdom is to be found in Jesus. Christ has been calling people to himself throughout his earthly ministry and since: “Come to me, all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28) “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” (Matthew 4:18, NIV) “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.” (Matthew 19:14) “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” (John 12:32) The images of Jesus as the good shepherd are powerful ones of gathering unto himself. He is the shepherd who knows each of his sheep, who will leave the flock to carry the one home, who will lay down his life to give them eternal life. When Nicodemus came to Jesus one night, Jesus told him that only those born from above, of the Spirit, can see the kingdom. He then presented himself as the Savior, the one of whom he explained, “whoever believes in him may have eternal life,” the one through whom “the world might be saved.”

It is already apparent that the invitation to Jesus was and is an invitation to more than belief. Jesus is inviting people into grace, into a new reality, into eternal life, and into restored relationship. “But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he

gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12-13) This reconciliation and adoption is possible only by the atoning work of Jesus on the cross: “For in (the Son) all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.” (Col 1:19-20) And this work reveals and serves the love of God: “In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.” (I John 4:10) John Stott writes, “Paul emphasizes that we are saved *from* wrath and *for* sonship. God sent his Son not just to redeem us but also to adopt us into his family.” Stott goes on to quote J.I. Packer: ““Were I asked to focus the New Testament message in three words, my proposal would be *adoption through propitiation*, and I do not expect ever to meet a richer or more pregnant summary of the gospel than that.””<sup>11</sup> The Son is sent in order to gather up other sons and daughters for the family of God.

### **The Father and the Son Send the Spirit for the Disciples**

In Jesus’ gathering up of new sons and daughters into kingdom life, the Holy Spirit is at work. When Christians are baptized, it is a baptism of the Holy Spirit that spiritually joins them to Christ. Life in Christ is life in the Spirit. Jesus explained to Nicodemus, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.” (John 3:5) Paul explained to the Christians in Rome, “For all

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<sup>11</sup> John Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 104.



who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God...” (8:14-16) The adoption and new life enjoyed by those who come to Jesus is effected by the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit would be the continuing presence of the Trinitarian God with the disciples after Jesus’ ascension, comforting and sustaining them as well as empowering them for ministry. It is impossible to completely tease apart the workings of the persons of the communal God; Jesus variously describes the sending of the Spirit as “the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name...” and “the Counselor...whom I will send to you from the Father...” (John 14:26, 15:26).

In the Holy Spirit both the communal and missional aspects of God’s character are seen. This Spirit joins believers into intimate relationship with God and with one another, but also empowers for mission that others also might be brought into communion. Several of the accounts of Jesus’ commissioning of the disciples are among the clearest references to the Trinity in Scripture. Of Acts 1, J.G. Davies quotes Roland Allen, ““The conclusion is inevitable, that the Spirit given was, in St. Luke’s view, a Spirit which impelled to missionary work, in fact a missionary Spirit’ and hence Acts demonstrates the inseparable connexion of the Holy Spirit and mission.”<sup>12</sup> Luke is not the only gospel writer to make this connection. On the first appearance of the resurrected Jesus among the gathered disciples that John records, “Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.’ And with that he breathed on them and

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<sup>12</sup> Roland Allen, The Ministry of the Spirit, 1960, p. 17, quoted in Davies, 29.

said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.’” (Jn 20:21-22) The account in Matthew instructs the disciples to baptize “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...” “Remember, I am with you always...” may be understood as the Spiritual presence of Christ. Fulfilling Jesus’ last promises to his disciples, the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost commenced a significant new wave in the mission of God: the Trinitarian God sending the disciples – the church - into the world to continue Jesus’ work of gathering up into the kingdom.

### **The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Send the Church for the World**

Much of the church in recent centuries neglected an understanding of mission that had to do primarily with the Trinitarian God. In fact mission as the work of the Trinity is a Biblical doctrine that was understood throughout the early centuries of the church. David Bosch describes, “Until the sixteenth century the term (mission) was used exclusively with reference to the doctrine of the Trinity, that is, of the sending of the Son by the Father and of the Holy Spirit by the Father and the Son.”<sup>13</sup> It was not until the mid-twentieth century that the western church again discovered this understanding of mission in which the mission of the church serves the *missio Dei*:

It was (at the 1952 Willingen Conference of the IMC) that the idea (not the exact term) *missio Dei* first surfaced clearly. Mission was understood as being derived from the very nature of God. It was thus put in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, not of ecclesiology or soteriology. The classical doctrine on the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending

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<sup>13</sup> David Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 1.

the Spirit, was expanded to include yet another “movement”: Father, Son and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world.<sup>14</sup>

With the ascension of Christ and Pentecost a new movement of God’s ongoing mission was begun through the sending of God’s people. Luke records Jesus’ words, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) Scholars have noted that especially in this “commission,” the Spirit’s effect of making witnesses or missionaries of disciples is characterized as inevitable and natural: “The gift of the Spirit is the gift of becoming involved in mission, for mission is the direct consequence of the outpouring the Spirit. Luke’s pneumatology excludes the possibility of a mission *command*; it implies, rather, a *promise* that the disciples will get involved in mission.”<sup>15</sup> The disciples did, and do. In baptism God’s people share in both the communal and missional aspects of God’s purposes. Baptism is not just for personal incorporation into the body of Christ but also for mission as part of the body of Christ in the world. The body is Christ’s, and the mission remains Christ’s. It is well argued that Acts is not the account of a new mission – the church’s – but the continuing mission of Jesus through the church, even the continued sending of Jesus through the church: “Just as God’s mission in sending Jesus (to Israel) was central and foundational during his earthly ministry, so too after his death and resurrection, with the way now open for

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 390.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 114.

repentance and the forgiveness of sins to be proclaimed in his name to all the nations (Luke 24:47), the sending of Jesus is still the essential mission.”<sup>16</sup>

The mission of the church continued, and continues, to serve *missio Dei* in Jesus. Jesus said to his disciples, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” These two waves of sending are related. The mission of the church, when true, continues that which Jesus began and made possible before his ascension – reaching out yet further to gather up yet more.

If there were any doubt early in the gospel accounts of God’s universal intention in mission, the various commissions recorded by the writers of the gospels answer them. Though the disciples did not comprehend the full meaning at the time, they were sent to “all the nations,” “the whole creation,” “the whole world,” “Jerusalem,” “all Judea and Samaria,” and “the ends of the earth.” What they could not envision on their own Jesus would reveal by pressing on ahead through the Holy Spirit. Startled Jewish apostles were recipients of a Spiritually active and expansive mission. The inclusion of the Gentiles would have been an insurmountable hurdle had not the Spirit catapulted the infant church into God’s new reality. The account of Cornelius and Peter is both one of the Spirit of God reaching out to and drawing in the Gentiles, and one of Peter being more fully converted to the communion and mission to which God would call all Christians:

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The of Peter being more fully converted to the communion and mission to which God would call circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, “Can anyone

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<sup>16</sup>Köstenberger and O’Brien, 123. Köstenberger and O’Brien among others see *Acts* as the continuing story of Jesus’ mission, cf. 1:1-2: “In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven...”

withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days. (Acts 10:44-48)

Just as the church’s mission continued Jesus’ earthly ministry in its universalism, it also continued it in its holism. Acts is a record of an expanding witness with signs of God’s new reign in every area of life. Peter and John healed a man lame from birth at the temple. Around the apostles and the early church in Jerusalem many people gathered to find healing from sickness and deliverance from unclean spirits. In Samaria Philip cast out demons, and cured the paralyzed or lame. Paul healed a crippled man in Lystra with such effect that the people rushed to worship him and Barnabas as gods. In Ephesus God’s work was so extraordinary through Paul that those who touched his handkerchiefs or aprons were healed and delivered from evil spirits. Always these signs and works of God’s kingdom were the ministry of Jesus - Jesus proclaimed in them, Jesus at work in them. In the proclamation of the gospel the unity between the kingdom and Jesus is heard in the simple summary of Paul’s final ministry years in Rome, the last words recorded in Acts, “Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 28:31).

The good news of the kingdom which the church brings to the all world continues to be invitation to Jesus. Acts is full of accounts of verbal proclamation of Jesus accompanying miracles and ministries of compassion. Peter and John did not create a stir just by healing the lame man but also by “teaching the people and proclaiming that in Jesus there is the resurrection of the dead.” When asked, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” Peter (“filled with the Holy Spirit”), answered, “This Jesus is

‘the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, it has become the cornerstone.’ There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.” (4:11-12) When Philip encountered the perplexed Ethiopian eunuch, it is recorded that “...Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus.” (Acts 8:35) In Samaria, where Philip had healed so many, he proclaimed “the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” - and many were baptized.

In the baptizing ministry committed to the church by Jesus God is seen at work gathering up God’s people. The accounts of the church growing in the second chapter of Acts are accounts of God saving and gathering: “So those who welcomed (Peter’s) message were baptized, and that day about three thousand were added.” God continued to so work in the days that followed, “And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.” Jesus had asked his disciples to pray, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” (Matthew 9:37-38) With the sending of the Holy Spirit, and the sending of the disciples, a new wave of God’s mission is underway, gathering up the harvest.

### **The Fulfillment of the Mission**

What will be the fulfillment of God’s mission? It will be many things to God’s glory: triumph over sin and death fully realized; a bride made spotless; the bowing of every knee bowing and confessing of every tongue that Jesus is Lord; a judgment in

which justice and grace are wrought; a new creation in which there will be no more weeping. A final extensive wave gathering in for the restoration of communion is highlighted for this theology.

It pleases God that the gathering in, or gathering up, will be broadly sweeping. God is not concerned for only one realm or a remnant of his creation. A concern for the whole of humanity and the whole of the created order is heard in scripture. This is not to say that salvation is universal but that God's interests are. God's redemptive actions are not just for humanity but for the whole of his beloved creation. "With all wisdom and insight (Jesus Christ) has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth." (Eph. 1:8b-9) As the gospel has been preached to every nation, the rest of creation has been waiting also in expectation:

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. (Romans 8:19-23)

God's gathering love is broad in cherishing all of heaven and earth. God's gathering love is broad in being mindful of each human being: "But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:8-10) The images of gathering around a table to break bread, or

gathering for a carefully prepared feast, are rich ones illustrating God's sending to all people in order to draw in. With a Gentile before him and the Gentile world in mind, Jesus quoted from Isaiah 49:12, "I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven..." (Matthew 8:11) He told the parable of the banquet to which those initially invited declined to attend, a parable in which God's passion to gather a people unto himself is evident:

Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, "Go out at once into the streets and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame." And the slave said, "Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room." Then the master said to the slave, "Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled." (Luke 14:21b-23)

God is a God of relationship. God's mission is not just sending out endlessly in order to enact a new reality beyond. The waves draw in. The new reality is one of reconciliation with God leading to restored communion. God's will in sending Jesus was to gather up those who would come to him:

Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day." (John 6:37-39)

The mission of God has been sending out, in order to gather up, to the glory of God and the satisfaction of his love. One day the mission of God will be complete, and God's communion with his people will be restored:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,  
     "See, the home of God is among mortals,  
     He will dwell with them;



they will be his peoples,  
 and God himself will be with them;  
 he will wipe every tear from their eyes.  
 Death will be no more;  
 mourning and crying and pain  
 will be no more,  
 for the first things have passed away.” (Rev. 21:1-4)

### **Christian Vocation in Light of God’s Communal and Missional Character**

The communal and missional character of God is reflected in the call of God’s people, for in Christ they are called to both relationship and service. Just as God’s mission is inseparable from his personal love, God intends for his people a unity of faith and action, body and soul, love and obedience. In reflecting on Christian vocation, it is helpful to consider the essential relationship between discipleship and mission.

#### **All Disciples are Missioners**

Every disciple of Jesus is sent in mission. One might say that all disciples are also apostles –mining the meaning of the word *αποστολος* - in that all disciples are also “sent ones.” However, in order to avoid confusion regarding the specific use of “apostle” in scripture in reference to the band of twelve,<sup>17</sup> or those who were the most immediate witnesses of the resurrected Jesus,<sup>18</sup> “missioner” is used here. Every disciple is a missioner. This is a doctrine that was neglected along with that of the ministry of the laity for centuries. It is ironic that during the vigorous missions movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the doctrine might have been obscured yet further;

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<sup>17</sup> See Acts 1

<sup>18</sup> e.g. Paul in Acts 9.

along with the swell of overseas missionary volunteers grew a perception that within the church there is a distinct class of professionals to whom a distant mission work belongs. In recent years the missional identity of the church is being rediscovered along with the ministry of the laity as the body of Christ.<sup>19</sup>

Both the missional church and the ministering laity are biblical. Jesus' commissions for mission were for more than just the twelve. In Luke 10 Jesus sends out 70 "others" in pairs to go ahead of him. In the commission recorded in Luke 24, John Stott notes that it was "the eleven and their companions..." to whom Jesus spoke:

And now the Son sends as he himself was sent. Already during his public ministry he sent out first the apostles and then the seventy as a kind of extension of his own preaching, teaching and healing ministry. Then after his death and resurrection he widened the scope of the mission to include all who call him Lord and themselves his disciples. For others were present with the twelve when the Great Commission was given (*eg* Luke 24:33). We cannot restrict its application to the apostles.<sup>20</sup>

The Spirit whom Jesus sent to the first disciples, making them into his witnesses, is for every Christian. The Spirit for whose baptism the twelve waited in Jerusalem was the same Spirit poured out upon thousands from every nation at Pentecost. In that outpouring the prophecy through Joel was fulfilled, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh...Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy..." (Acts 2:17, 18) Three thousand repented and were baptized into Christ. By the Holy Spirit they, too, became witnesses. A number of

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<sup>19</sup> See Darrell L. Guder, *Missional Church, A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), and Greg Ogden, *The New Reformation: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990).

<sup>20</sup> Stott, 22.

theologians regard Jesus' words to the disciples "...the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and you will be my witnesses..." as promise rather than command. "The gift of the Spirit is the gift of becoming involved in mission, for mission is the direct consequence of the outpouring the Spirit."<sup>21</sup>

Being baptized by the Spirit into the community of faith is to become part of a community whose vocation it is to proclaim the gospel. The three thousand baptized at Pentecost were baptized into a witnessing body. When Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, he described the congregation as being "salt" and "light" in the world.<sup>22</sup> God had given a mission to Israel, which was and is being fulfilled in Christ, and now all those in Christ participate in that mission: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (I Peter 2:9) Köstenberger and O'Brien observe:

Peter perceives the believing community's presence in the world from the vantage point of mission, stressing its identity as a witnessing body analogous to Israel's intended function ( P.J. Robinson 1989: 176-187). The transference of covenant categories from God's old-covenant community to his new in 2:9-10 climaxes in the purpose statement of 2:9: 'that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light', a quotation from the eschatological passage of Isaiah 43:21.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 114. See also Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*, rev.ed., Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995.

58; Dyrness, *Let the Earth Rejoice*, 155.

<sup>22</sup> See Roger Peterson, Gordon Aeschliman and R. Wayne Sneed, "God's Fools," in *Maximum Impact Short-Term Mission: The God-commanded, Repetitive Deployment of Swift, Temporary, Non-professional Missionaries* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: STEMPress, 2003), 15-35.

<sup>23</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien, 239.

The church is missional, and all of her members have a missional identity.

Using the theology of Barth, Bosch argues convincingly that the church is “missionary by its very nature,” that “since God is a missionary God...God’s people are a missionary people.”<sup>24</sup> Rather than mission being a particular aspect or special activity of the church, the church is the church as it is in mission. Up to a point it may be said that disciples are disciples as they are in mission – their devotion, their following, their worshipful offerings of service, their irrepressible praise of the saving Lord, is a worship that is necessarily active in the world. All disciples are missionaries – they cannot be otherwise if following Jesus.

The closely intertwined relationship between discipleship and mission is illustrated in Jesus’ calling of the first disciples. In each of the synoptic gospels Jesus’ call is described concisely in a few verses. The whole meaning of Jesus’ call is represented succinctly as well, as the call to follow Jesus includes the mission inherent in life as his disciple: “As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea – for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me and I will make you fish for people.’ And immediately they left their nets and followed him.” (Mark 1:16-20) Jesus told his disciples later, “You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last...” (Jn 15:16) Election is for service.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 372.

<sup>25</sup> See David Bosch, “Reflections on Biblical Models of Mission,” in *Towards the Twenty first Century in Mission*, ed. James M. Phillips and Robert T. Coote (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans 1993), 186. See also Davies, 45.

By the commission of Jesus who was sent and who is sending, by the baptism of the Holy Spirit who enlivens and empowers to witness, by incorporation into a community sent to bear witness to the world, by their own adherence to a Lord on a mission, all disciples are missionaries; they cannot be otherwise. Their baptism makes them missionaries.<sup>26</sup> This is good news for many who have thought that ministry and mission were for only a few in the body of Christ: “In the missional community all are ordained to ministry in their baptism; all receive the same vocation to mission; and all are gifted in various ways for that mission as they participate in the twofold journey of the reign of God that is both inward and outward.”<sup>27</sup>

### All Missioners are Disciples

Those whom Jesus sends in mission are those who have been called to him and have come to him as disciples. Most contemporary theologies of mission reflect substantially on the missional identity of every disciple; few give significant attention to the discipleship of those sent in mission. This identity of disciple may be assumed or seem obvious. In a worldwide church, however, that has spent decades debating and dividing evangelism and social action, and in a still largely modern culture that may divorce the spiritual from the practical, it is beneficial to explore the relationship of the missionary to Christ. If God’s mission is the redemption of creation for communion, then

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<sup>26</sup> See Mons A. Teig, “Holy Baptism: Promise Big Enough for the World,” in *Inside Out: Worship in an Age of Mission*, ed. Thomas Schattauer (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 46. See also Davies, 82.

<sup>27</sup> Alan J. Roxburgh, “Missional Leadership: Equipping God’s People for Mission,” in *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, ed. Darrell L. Guder (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 200.

the relationship of the disciple to Christ is as of much interest as the service of the disciple for Christ. To give attention to this relationship is to recognize the communal interests of God represented in mission. It is also to restore a holism in understanding mission, a holism in which faith and action, piety and service, devotion and obedience are held together. True mission cannot be carried out apart from personal relationship with Jesus.

It may be said that discipleship precedes apostleship, for discipleship is foundational for mission. Christians are called to communion with Christ before being sent out by Christ. Though Jesus makes plain at the outset that there is cost to be counted in choosing to follow him, the relationship begins with devotion to the Lord and not to the mission. Baptism may make Christians missionaries, but baptism is first an act of being brought into new life *in Christ*. The primary identity of the Christian is in Christ. Discipleship has to do with personal relationship, while mission is expression and the world is context for this relationship.<sup>28</sup> Christians are sent in mission because of whose they are – Jesus’ disciples. It may be argued that devotion is not known apart from obedience: “Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.” (Mark 3:35). However, the foundational nature of discipleship (when understood as possession by and devotion to Christ) is understood when considering that baptizing others

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<sup>28</sup> “Those made disciples and baptized by Christ’s messengers are to follow Jesus just as the eleven did. He himself is now the content of his own earlier teaching, the embodiment of God’s reign, the gospel. Discipleship is determined by the relation to Christ himself, not by conformity to an impersonal ordinance. The context of this is not the classroom (where “teaching” usually takes place for us), nor even the church, but the world.” Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 67.

necessarily follows being baptized oneself. The ministry of baptizing is given to the baptized; the ministry of making disciples is given to disciples.

The gospel accounts of the first disciples called to Jesus illustrate the relationship between being called and being sent. Throughout the gospels, those who followed Jesus were called his disciples.<sup>29</sup> The accounts of Jesus gathering them up are instructive. When Jesus called the first disciples to be missionaries, he called them first to himself: “*Come, follow me*, and I will make you fishers of men.” (Mt. 4:19). The order of these calls is not arbitrary. The NIV translation of Matthew 4:19 preserves the full meaning of the imperative δευτε - “come here.” Though it is tied to the adverb οπισω for “after” or “behind” and then rendered simply “follow” in the NRSV in this one instance, “come, follow...” is a fuller translation that is accurate and has meaning. Δευτε, for example, is also used in Jesus’ summons “Come to me...and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28) In calling disciples, Jesus is not calling them just to track after him, but to be with him. “He went up the mountain and called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, and to have authority to cast out demons.” (Mark 3:13-14) Bosch observes of those who answered Jesus’ call: “What...do they become disciples *for*? First, as Mark puts, it, they are called to be disciples simply “to be with him” [3:14]... Following Jesus or being with him, and sharing in his mission thus belong together.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Bosch observes “disciples” is the only name of Christ’s followers in the gospels. See his discussion of “Jesus and His Disciples” in *Transforming Mission*, 36-39.

<sup>30</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 38.

The relationship between disciples and Jesus is one in which faith grows, and faith is essential for mission and ministry. O'Brien and Köstenberger call discipleship that includes the growing of faith "an indispensable prerequisite for mission."<sup>31</sup> Jesus urges those who follow him to begin their work with faith and belief. "Then they said to (Jesus), 'What must we do to perform the works of God?'" Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." (John 6:28) Here Jesus takes "works" back to their source in belief – truly good works are the outworking of belief, the active expression of belief. There is no doubt that in service faith is expressed, tested, and grown, but the priority between faith and works is not quite as ambiguous as that between the chicken and the egg. Even in James, where faith without works is bluntly and truthfully described as dead, the nuanced relationship between the two is seen: "...You see that faith was active along with (Abraham's) works, and faith was *brought to completion* by the works." (James 2:22, emphasis added). Though they are intimately related, the Great Commission follows the Greatest Commandment. Just as for God a love for creation has led to mission, for disciples a love for the Lord (and neighbor) leads to mission. The vertical makes the horizontal possible.

Communion with Christ not only nurtures for mission, it also witnesses to Christ in and of itself. As Jesus prays in John 17, the unity of the disciples with the Father and the Son (and then also with one another) is considered critical to their witness to the world. Jesus prays to the Father for his disciples:

As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

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<sup>31</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien, 92-95.



I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. (John 17:18-24)

In communion with Christ, disciples are instructed for mission. The literal understanding of μαθητης as “learner” or “student” is not to be overlooked. Disciples can only minister that which they know. Disciple making necessitates a conscious appreciation of the substance of one’s own discipleship. Disciples learn how to make disciples both from their own experience and from the explicit instruction of Jesus. The gospels describe Jesus as forming his followers by teaching and by sharing ministry. This happens in the relationship of Lord and disciple.

The making of disciples (the term occurs elsewhere only in 13:52; 2:57; and Acts 14:21) entails the bringing of a person into the relationship of student to teacher in order to take the teacher’s yoke upon himself and learn from him (11:29). In effect, successful disciple-making therefore presupposes the committed discipleship of the disciple-makers themselves.<sup>32</sup>

Many sermons have been preached on Philip calling Nathanael to “come and see” what Philip had discovered for himself in following Jesus.<sup>33</sup> In mission, disciples have a ministry of invitation not just because they are conveying Christ’s invitation; they are able to invite others to that which they have experienced themselves.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>33</sup> John 1:43-45.

In communion with Christ disciples are empowered for mission. The utter dependency that Christians have upon Jesus for fruitful ministry is described in the metaphor of the vine and branches. It is worthwhile to consider a lengthy portion of the passage, as it fleshes out the relationship between abiding and bearing fruit, love and obedience. Even where Jesus says that to keep the commandments is to abide in love, he goes on to describe a commandment which is to love one another as Jesus has loved, even laying down his life. There is no fruitfulness apart from abiding, there is no keeping of the commandments apart from love:

Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ...My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be complete in you, and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call your servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another. (John 15:1-17)

The relationship of abiding between disciples and the Lord includes an experience of presence. Jesus' prayers and promises for the disciples in John include assurance that the Spirit would be present with them even after Jesus' ascension. By the Spirit Jesus may promise "surely I am with you always..." It may even be argued that *because* Jesus is spiritually present the disciples will go: "The clause 'I am with you always' is, however,

not logically subordinated to the ‘go...and make disciples.’ It is, rather, the other way around – because Jesus continues to be present with his disciples, they go out in mission.”<sup>34</sup>

Jesus’ own mission is both the example for and the substance of the disciples’ mission,<sup>35</sup> and so missionaries do well to study the posture of Jesus in relationship to the Father in mission. The interplay between presence and obedient service is evident when Jesus says, ‘When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me. And the one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him.’” (John 8:28-29) Real spiritual experience and substance is essential for mission that is of God; it is the Christ who carries out mission through disciples.

Communion with God in Christ is not just a foundation for mission, it is an end of mission. Christians are a missionary people because God is a missionary God. It is also true, however, that they are a missionary people because God is a God of communion; therefore his people are also a people for communion. God is seeking not mere missionary recruits but sons and daughters who will seek other sons and daughters. Sherron George writes, “Following Jesus in mission involves a rhythm of discipleship and apostleship, of continually coming to Jesus and being sent out to bring others to Jesus.”<sup>36</sup> The relationship with God that disciples enjoy has its own value to God:

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<sup>34</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 77.

<sup>35</sup> See R.E. Brown quoted in Köstenerger and O’Brien, 222.

<sup>36</sup> George, 8.

The seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, in your name even the demons submitted to us!” He said to them, “I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:17-20)

The ultimate identity of Jesus’ followers is not to be found in the mission God has given them but in the personal, relational claim God has upon them.

### **Radical Discipleship, Radical Mission**

The communion and the mission to which Jesus calls disciples are radical, and in the consuming commitment that the Lordship of Jesus requires they are held together.

James Engel and William Dyrness observe, “Missions flows from the heart of a people who have been transformed by the Holy Spirit and who leave all to follow Christ.”<sup>37</sup>

A consideration of Christian vocation in terms of discipleship and mission is not complete or candid without listening to Jesus’ hard and promising description of life and service with him:

Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor. (John 12:23-28)

Both in discipleship and mission the full and dramatic implications of Christian baptism are comprehended. Neither is possible aside from dying and finding life in Christ: “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into

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<sup>37</sup> James F. Engel and William A. Dyrness, *Changing the Mind of Missions* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 36.

his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:3-4)

A call to Christ is a call to die. A call to mission is a call to die. Any missionary does well to study this truth. Jonathan Bonk writes, “For the mission or missionary that is *Christian* in the most profound sense of the term, self-denial is not merely a periodically inconvenient necessity, but a radical strategy marking all of those who are in step with Christ.”<sup>38</sup> The teaching is hard but the promise is rich: a costly price is paid in the mission of God, but a priceless treasure is gained as God gathers up his people to his glory and the satisfaction of his love.

### **A Description of the Mission of the Church**

The theology presented in this chapter is intended to be relevant for every Christian who would know what his or her vocation is as a disciple and a missionary. It is not a theology of short-term mission per se, though the project presented in this thesis happens to be related to such. Missioners who participate in short-term mission are called to and by Christ as every Christian is called. One particular form of their service – a short-term mission – is a part of their larger mission in service of *missio Dei*. Therefore, the best foundation for orientating short-term missioners focuses not on the particular form of mission but on the identity of the missioners in Christ – to whom and for what are they called and sent? In chapter two the problems avoided and benefits

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<sup>38</sup> Jonathan J. Bonk, “Mission and the Problem of Affluence,” in *Toward the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in Christian Mission*, ed. James M. Phillips and Robert T. Coote (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 304.

realized in such an orientation are described. Before exploring those problems and solutions, it is useful to provide a brief definition of “mission” for this work that reflects the theology just presented:

Disciples are sent by Jesus to all the world to proclaim by word and deed the good news that the kingdom of God is at hand in Christ. This proclamation of the gospel includes invitation to be reconciled to and adopted by God through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. This mission includes discipleship of those who would come to Christ, that they too would be equipped to join the mission. Their mission is in service of *missio Dei*, the redemptive gathering up of God’s creation to God’s glory and the satisfaction of his love. In the chapters that follow the necessary discipleship of missionaries is described as essential for approaching short-term mission work within this theology.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE PROBLEM OF SELF-CENTERED “MISSION” AND THE NEED FOR ORIENTATION TO CHRIST

Discipleship is essential for mission. If missionaries are first disciples, and if the practice of mission is the outworking of relationship with a missional Lord, then the discipling of Christians will nurture them for both communion and service. It is not uncommon for the relationship between discipleship and mission to be assumed or taken for granted. It ought not to be, for there are spiritual, historical and cultural forces at play that would encourage the church, congregations, and individuals Christian to engage in service that is not grounded in communion with Christ. The short-term missions movement underway in the North American church is producing both positive and negative proof of the importance of discipleship for Christians in mission. Orienting missionaries to Christ through disciplines observed in the small group that is the mission team is one effective means of such needed discipling.

#### **A Movement with Promise and Problems**

There is a movement underway of people engaged in short-term mission that is having tremendous impact on individuals, congregations, and the work and witness of the church worldwide. The size alone of the movement impresses. Over the past 40 years the growth in short-term mission activities has been exponential. In 2003 it was

estimated that involvement in short-term mission has grown from 50,000 individual participants in 1965 to well over 1,000,000. It was also estimated that 35,000 U.S. congregations, as well as 3,700 agencies and 1,000 schools, sent teams in short-term mission in 2003.<sup>39</sup> In October 2006, the estimated number of North American participants in short-term missions per year had grown to one and half million – and that for missions abroad only.<sup>40</sup> The many reasons for the explosive growth in the short-term mission movement will not be explored in depth here. But they may include the “shrinking globe” with knowledge of and connections in other countries and cultures; increasingly accessible and affordable opportunity for travel to places previously regarded as remote and (still regarded) as exotic; a change in the understanding mission to include volunteers and short-term missionaries as well as professional and career missionaries; an emphasis on experiential spirituality and hands-on service within and without the church in the generation coming of age; a movement of the Holy Spirit calling and empowering the laity for the mission of God.<sup>41</sup>

Short-term missions take many forms. Individuals, youth groups, and teams from congregations are being sent around the neighborhood and around the world to experience and participate in mission. While “short-term mission” might encompass periods ranging from a weekend to three years, a common term of service for teams sent by congregations is one to three weeks, with two thirds of short-term missionaries serving

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<sup>39</sup> Peterson, Aeschliman, and Sneed, 243-252.

<sup>40</sup> Robert J. Priest et. al., “Researching the Short-Term Mission Movement,” *Missiology* 34, (October 2006), 432-434.

<sup>41</sup> For one discussion of influences for the growth in short-term mission, see Peterson, Aeschilman, and Sneed., 253-255.



for two weeks or less.<sup>42</sup> School calendars, vacation allotments by employers, and responsibilities to family and home have a large role in determining the length of time individuals are able to give to a mission project on site if it is a distance from home. The natures of mission projects are diverse. Examples include fellowship and encouragement with another part of the body of Christ, evangelistic ministry in communities or groups of students or athletes, Vacation Bible school programs for children, medical clinic service, or construction projects. The forms that partnership takes between sending and receiving entities vary widely as well. Examples on the far ends of the continuum would be the group that independently plans and carries out its mission with little or no contact with the church in the community of service, and the team made of up those from both the sending and receiving communities who maintain ongoing communication and relationship beyond the trip. Roger Peterson, Gordon Aeschliman and R. Wayne Sneed have estimated that there are over 777 million possible variations in short-term mission given the many factors at play in forming any one mission initiative.<sup>43</sup>

This burgeoning movement has been met with mixed reviews for its varied fruit. Christian witness cultivated over decades may be undermined in two weeks by ten missionaries, and hearts hardened over decades may be softened in two weeks through ten missionaries. There are testimonies of great blessing where Christian receiver hosts have described relationships formed with visiting teams in which ministry and witness in the local context has been greatly enhanced. At the same time, concerns have been expressed by weary career missionaries who must prepare for short term missionaries who are

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 433.

<sup>43</sup> Peterson, Aeschliman and Sneed, 110.

unclear about their own relationship to God, and national pastors who are outraged that participants arrive prepared for a novel vacation experience but not for mission.<sup>44</sup> What is going wrong?

### **Christ at the Periphery, Self at the Center**

There are many ways to view the underlying issues with problematic short-term missions, and one perspective is that of the prevalence of self-centered mission. “Self-centered mission” should have the ring of a theological oxymoron, and yet daily individuals and church groups around the country are pursuing such, usually unwittingly. The challenge to engage in mission well is not new or particular to the short-term movement. It has been argued by many that in general the missions movements of the western church in the later twentieth century had lost their biblical and spiritual moorings, and that a decline or even crisis was present.<sup>45</sup> The new phenomenon of short-term missions shares many of the problems and promises of the current wider missions movement, often showcasing both the failures and potential in sharp detail. There are various reasons why missions in general, and short-term missions in particular, are susceptible to such failures.

The first part of the task at hand is to consider some of the spiritual, historical and cultural influences that have shaped the problems of the emerging short-term missions movement. It will be argued that these influences have encouraged a lack of mooring to

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<sup>44</sup> Testimonies of both of these types of experience were shared with the author by missionaries with mainline denominations and independent boards, and national pastors, in the course of mission trips between 1998 and 2003.

<sup>45</sup> See Engel and Dyrness, chapters one through three, as one example.

Jesus - a significant source of the problems seen in short-term mission. This is, in crucial respects, a spiritual problem. The result is that the practice of mission becomes self-centered. With Jesus at the periphery, communion and service are not held together. In this work and in the writing of others,<sup>46</sup> this divide, or related ones are also described by other metaphors: the vertical and the horizontal, evangelism and social justice, heart and hand, devotion and obedience, faith and action. In response to such divisions, a reorientation to mission with Christ at the center is presented as an answer.

### **How Could This Happen?**

#### **Prone to Wander**

Robert Robinson's hymn *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing* expresses well the stubborn tendency fallen human beings have toward sin: "Prone to wander, Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love..." Humanity's struggle to keep communion with God goes back to the very beginning. It was in the garden, on the heels of the completion of a "good" creation of a special relationship, that those who had been created by the very breath of God broke the relationship. Told that "...when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God..." humanity chose the will of self rather than the will of God. Immediately it was learned that one could not act independently of God and continue to enjoy intimate relationship with him.

Humanity's continued willful failures at keeping covenant with the God who has lovingly and persistently pursued them are documented throughout Scripture. In the

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<sup>46</sup> For example see Davies, Stott, and Dyrness.

literal and spiritual wanderings of God's people God has sought to bring them back to relationship. God has not been interested in mere religious actions, but a heartfelt communion to be restored with his people. After David committed adultery with Bathsheba, he recognized that his sin, and his repentance, were not just matters of action but of devotion: "For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." God's prophet Joel calls Israel to heartfelt repentance with similar language, "Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing." (2:12-13) God's love will be satisfied with nothing less than the loving response of his people. This insistence is heard through the prophet Jeremiah: "I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart." (24:7) Again, a relationship of true communion is portrayed in the substance of the new covenant that would be made in Christ: "I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (31:33)

Christ whose blood has sealed the new covenant has made communion with God possible once again. And yet even those in Christ struggle with the old self who does not relinquish the center without a struggle – it is an ongoing dying. Human beings still wrestle with the temptation to abide by a sinful will and wander. Those who are in Christ continue to be tempted to offer good works rather than faith in seeking God. And so even those offerings that are made to God, those things that would be done for God, can be

tainted and shaped by the selfish interests, felt needs, awry perspectives, and ill-placed hopes of people still this side of perfection and glory.

### The Church's Struggle to Hold Faith and Action Together

Not just individuals are tempted to faithlessness – the church, too, is perfect in Christ and yet still being perfected. Being comprised of human beings, it is not immune to self-serving impulses or skewed perspectives. The brutal triumphalism of the Crusades, the opportunism and entitlement protested in the Reformation, the imperialism of missions in the colonial era, the paternalism present in the Great Century of Missions, have all been cause for lamenting and repenting. Some of the sins of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries still cast shadows. When considering the tendency toward imperialism in mission, for example, James Engel and William Dyrness describe an imperialistic “structural hangover” that continues to impact contemporary missions efforts despite good intentions for reform.<sup>47</sup>

In the twentieth century the church continued to have struggles in discerning its mission to the world and answering it faithfully. While perhaps not seen as gross a missing of the mark as the Crusades, the debate and divide between conservatives and liberals, and the related divide between evangelism and social justice in mission, have left their impact on missions in general and have made a missional impression on perhaps unknowing congregations and church members.

The divide between the conservative and liberal branches of the church in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries shaped their respective missiologies, and short-term

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<sup>47</sup> Engel and Dyrness, 46.

mission programs in congregations or agencies in turn are influenced today by this divide. For those on the fundamentalist and evangelical side of the split, the dichotomy between faith and action has neglected the latter. William Dyrness in *Changing the Mind of Missions: Where Have We Gone Wrong?* calls the inheritors of that which can become a benign, pie-in-the-sky gospel to address material impoverishment, societal evils, and relational inequalities with the kind of vigor and hope that should characterize citizens of the kingdom of God. There are models for this in the holistic gospel seen in Puritan and Wesleyan revivals during the Great Awakening. There are also those in this generation that walk in the wake of the liberal side of the divide, reflecting a movement in the 1960's among the ecumenical church to "desacralize" the church and look to the world for its agenda.<sup>48</sup> For a good while the answer to that agenda was seen to be development, and at the level of the pews that is still being embraced in many places. Sometimes these works are carried out with a persistent and naïve faith in human potential and a strangely pious neglect of Christ as the center of the gospel and the kingdom. Of the divide regarding mission, Lesslie Newbigin writes:

(The debate about the nature of the Church's mission) ...is often embodied in a structural dichotomy. The concern of those who see mission primarily in terms of action for God's justice is embodied mainly in programs carried out at a supra-congregational level by boards and committees, whether denominational or ecumenical. The concern of those who see mission primarily in terms of personal conversion is expressed mainly at the level of congregational life. The effect of this is that each is robbed of its character by separation from the other. Christian programs for justice and compassion are severed from their proper roots in the liturgical and sacramental life of the congregation, and so lose their character as signs of the presence of Christ and risk becoming mere crusades fueled by a moralism that can be self-righteous. And the life of the worshipping

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<sup>48</sup> See Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 398.

congregation, severed from its proper expression in compassionate service to the secular community around it, risks becoming a self-centered existence serving only the needs and desires of its members.<sup>49</sup>

In either case, in the division there is something of the personal or institutional “self” served, and the comprehensive call of Christ to communion and mission is not answered. As can be seen, the extreme emphases in the two schools of theology can encourage individuals and churches in mission to so divide faith and action. Theological or political agenda, even tenacious pride of camp, in the church can take the place of Christ in mission and impact those who are engaging in short-term missions.

#### Not in a Cultural Vacuum

To fallen humanity’s duplicitous nature, and the church’s continuing bifurcation between spirit and body, is added the current American cultural context that encourages problems (as well as possibilities) in the practice of mission. A summary of those influences is helpful before looking at the problematic bearing too often characteristic of short-term missions.<sup>50</sup>

Out of the Enlightenment emerged the modern era and a society newly confident in itself apart from God. Science ascended the throne in determining what is “true,” and “facts” became esteemed to the point that values - including issues of faith - were relegated to the realm of “personal and private.” Faith became something privatized, held in a sphere separate from the rest of life. For some in the church this

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<sup>49</sup> Newbigin, 10-11.

<sup>50</sup> See for example Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 349-362, and Engel and Dyrness, 57-61, for discussion of modernity and postmodernism. Key points are summarized here.

compartmentalization is such that “faith” is understood to be confined to Sunday morning and personal religious activity. In this new era individualism and autonomy have been promoted and tradition and community sidelined. The rights given to personal needs, and personal freedom, further illustrate the place of the self. The authority of the reasoning self has gained respect. Optimism in human potential has grown, and that which humanity might produce – development, technology – are the tools of salvation for those in need. Capitalism and consumerism have become part of the cultural fabric during this time. Americans groom one another to be consumers within a society bent on economic growth, and such growth and wealth are understood to be the substance of a quality life, something which any human being would desire.

While the trappings of modernity are still seen in American society, the postmodern era currently emerging has created some important shifts. A realization that development may not answer all has reduced optimism in human potential answering the world’s need. Along with this is a growing distrust of human institutions, including the church - and by her members. The institutional church might be seen as non-essential or even suspect for living a “spiritual” life. Individuals, groups and congregations may see the church as irrelevant or disappointing, seek alternative means toward spiritual experience and community and personal growth. There is a growing spiritual thirst for a faith that is relevant to all of life, and the divide between the private and the public may be cracking. In that assault is reflected a new kind of authoritative self, the self who trusts personal feelings for what is true and valuable. While there is something self-centered in this relativistic approach to life, the postmodern generation is at the same time



aware of an increasingly pluralistic society and desirous of experiences of diversity and community.

The influences of the modern and postmodern eras are evident in the church, in missions, and in the short-term missions movement. Also evident are the legacies of the church's struggles and the ongoing effect of human sin. Some troubling effects of muddled motives in short-term missions reveal those influences and are described below.

### **Self-Centered Approaches**

In addition to the Spirit of Christ, many forces are at play in the lives of individuals and congregations who would come to Jesus and follow him in mission.

Miriam Adney surveys the landscape of the short-term missions movement with concern:

Something is awry in the mission commitments of many congregations. Enthusiasm is easily generated for short-term missions, yet career missionaries discover that few people want to hear about their work. Actions and car washes raise funds for short-termers, while money for established projects can suffer. Unfortunately, much of our short-term work fosters dependency instead of empowering people. And because of inadequate preparation, some short-termers damage existing Christian witness or exhaust missionaries and national leaders.<sup>51</sup>

One perspective for framing many of the problems seen in short-term missions has been described as self-centered rather than Christ-centered approaches and practices of mission. While general use of the term "self-centered" may bring to mind qualities of narcissism, conceit, or arrogance, this is not necessarily the meaning here. "Self-centered" is used in a less pejorative way, to indicate a point of reference, or orientation. Willful sin, offense to God and injury to neighbor are self-centered. However, there are

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<sup>51</sup> Miriam Adney, "McMissions: Short-termers have their place, but not at the expenses of career missionaries," *Christianity Today*, November 11, 1996, 14.

many good pursuits carried out for self-centered reasons – one may begin an exercise program to become more healthy and feel more energetic; a course of study may be taken up to sharpen one's mind or afford intellectual enjoyment. The exercise of sin obviously can be a problem in the practice of short-term mission, but so can a well-meaning self-centered point of reference. It is common today to find individuals and church groups engaging in short-term mission for self-centered reasons. Oftentimes those reasons have to do with the formation of individuals and the revitalization of the congregation or its programs. Recognizing short-term mission as part of the mission of God, however, demands that it not be used as a kind of spiritual weight-lifting exercise to the end that its participants may enjoy their own fitness. To what end is the exercise? If it is to anything other than devotion to the Lord and the offering of self in service of Christ's mission, there is need for reorientation. Below some common self-centered motives for short-term missions are described.

1. Short-term mission trips are sometimes used to enhance the variety of church programs. They can be viewed as an offering for those who are especially "outreach minded," those who like to travel, those who have skills in construction, or youth groups. In any case, when mission is viewed as one of many programs in the church it is doubtful that the individuals or congregation will have a missional sense of vocation. Mission ought to be seen as inseparable from discipleship, as part and parcel of the worship of God and life in Christ. When mission teams are seen as the sub-group to which mission – understood as a program – is delegated, it may even happen that as a congregation

“commissions” a mission team there is a reversal of intent when the person in the pew reflects that there are (other) particular members who “do mission.”

2. Short-term missions may be offered to meet the consumer interests of members and friends. Paul Borthwick, a minister of missions who has been leading short-term mission teams since 1977, writes:

The bad news is that sponsoring short-term youth teams has become a fad. They’ve become a part of the church’s youth program like retreats and lock-ins. Some of the projects are little more than summer camping programs. The trips become almost like taking the youth group to Disneyworld. We need to take a hard look at short-term youth teams because of how much they cost the sending church, how much they cost the missionaries on the field, and because they can easily degenerate into “adventure vacations for Jesus.”<sup>52</sup>

Travel can be especially appealing to recreational interests. The desire to travel might be regarded as an important part of a call to mission, given the emphasis erroneously placed on “go” rather than “make disciples” in the Great Commission. Travel is not “doing mission,” and yet for many churches the “trip” defines mission. It is heard in statements such as “I do mission trips.” It is not uncommon for applicants to express a desire to “see Kenya” or “experience Asia” in mission. Might the individual and perhaps even the body grow from exposure resulting in an expanded world view? No doubt. But this is not the purpose of mission.

3. Short-term mission trips can be appealing in the quest for personal growth and existential meaning. Short-term missionaries should have personal qualities of humility, receptivity, submissiveness, willingness to be personally transformed. Such a spirit is essential for a disciple participating in mission in the world. But a primary desire for

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<sup>52</sup> Paul Borthwick, “Short-term Youth Teams: Are They Worth It?” in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, October 1996, 403.

intense experience serving personal growth is incompatible with mission. The two approaches are antithetical, and those seeking such experiences have little or worse to offer in mission. One veteran missionary writes, “As we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many of these same (ethnocentric) attitudes and practices continue to be perpetuated through short-term mission events. The added twist today is that short terms have increasingly taken on the character of a standardized religious service offered to a new generation of consumers anxious to find meaning in a borderless world.”<sup>53</sup> A more altruistic twist to the personal growth quest is approaching mission as service learning - but what of those who may be viewed as the training project? Another career missionary in Mexico describes, “In the last twenty years the spirit of the visiting groups has changed also. Today they are much less concerned about the impact they will have in Mexico and more concerned about the impact Mexico will have on them. The growing number of organizations that bring groups to the border combined with the shift in focus has begun to have a negative effect on the Mexican churches.”<sup>54</sup>

4. In some cases, mission trips are intentionally used as evangelism for participants. A concerned parent sends a troubled son or daughter on the church mission trip in the hopes that he or she will be turned around by the community and the experience. Or mission team members encourage their non-Christian, or unchurched, friends to participate with them in hope that they will recognize Christ as Lord or at least take a greater interest in God as a result of the experience. A congregation may take

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<sup>53</sup> Richard Slimbach, “First, do no harm,” in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, October 2000, 429.

<sup>54</sup> Aaron Palmatier, “Spring Break Mission Trips: A Blessing or a Curse?” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 39 (April 2002): 228.

pride in their inclusiveness in forming teams; participants may “sign up” rather than apply or be called. It is true that all disciples are called to roles in God’s mission, that all mission is carried out in human weakness and divine power, and that the church is called to be a light that lives openly in the midst of the world that others would join in worship of God. Yet there is a problem when a defined mission is used intentionally to evangelize or minister to those who are - with understanding or not – named and held up as witnesses. Few sending congregations, and most national church leaders and career missionaries, comprehend the importance of this concern. The problem is not necessarily that these “missionaries” are inarticulate when expected to speak or minister out of faith, or that they are less spiritually mature than those with and for whom they have come to serve. If they are not disciples of Christ, they cannot be Christ’s missionaries, and they are present in service of the self, even if it is the seeking self. If the mission is not Christ’s, it will be something else. There is a place in the ministry of the church to offer engaging experiences primarily to invite people to new or deepened faith, or, for that matter, any other personal benefit. But such programs should not be called “mission” unless it is understood that the mission is to the participants (mission-in-reverse). There are any number of names that have been and can be given to diverse experiences and trips that are prepared for the expressed benefit of participants: work camps, cultural exchanges, faith explorations, study tours, spiritual retreats.

Short-term mission may afford participants some praise and perceived grounds for self-esteem. Human beings feel good about their good deeds, and are inclined to feel good as well about the affirmation of others in regard to their works. It may be seen as

noble to go and help those in need. Furthermore, it is an experience of power to believe one possesses something another needs, and it can be gratifying to be the agent of aid. Beneficence can be deceptively self-serving. A veteran missionary in Honduras observed, “North Americans often come seeking the emotional rewards of hands-on involvement rather than a way to make an investment in long-term empowerment.”<sup>55</sup> If there is any doubt that good Christians should be subject to such temptations, the story of two of Jesus’ twelve closest followers illustrates the point:

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” And he said to them, “What is it you want me to do for you?” And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” They replied, “We are able.” Then Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”

When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. So Jesus called them and said to them, “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”(Mark 10:35-45)

Short-term missions may be approached in many ways - travel opportunities, “vacations with a purpose,” personal growth experiences, selection and grooming tools for future career missionaries, world-view educational exercises. Many of these experiences may be truly present in authentic short-term mission – travel, purposefulness, growth, discernment of call, expanding worldview. However, none of these ought to be allowed to stand as the central motivation or basic understanding of a mission. If short-

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<sup>55</sup> Paul Jeffrey “Beyond Good Intentions,” *Christian Century* vol. 118: 5.

term missionaries are to bear fruit like “real” missionaries, then their mission ought to be treated as real mission -the mission of God, and they ought to be oriented to the Lord who calls them to himself before sending them out.

### **The Impact of Self-Centered Mission**

When short-term missionaries approach mission in service of the self, it must be asked whether or not the mission of God is truly served. God may see fit to use any offering for his purposes and glory. However, when disciples or even the church take up mission apart from Christ, and in a spirit other than the Spirit of Christ, damage may be done. Some of the troubling effects of self-centered short-term mission are described below.<sup>56</sup>

Short-term missionaries bent on personal enrichment may engage in mission with literally or metaphorically empty hands. Shifts in the last couple of generations in models of mission may have had unintended consequence in regard to the perspectives of short-term missionaries. Good theology has received a skewed and surface reading by those who read through a self-oriented lens. The repentance of paternalistic and imperialistic approaches to mission was much needed correction, as was the adoption of the partnership model in mission. But there is all the difference between humble and self-deferential service and the primary expectation to be served. Another message heard by some is that presence and relationship are among some of the more meaningful, and possible, gifts that short-term missionaries can offer. While this is true, it does not justify

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<sup>56</sup> These effects of self-centered short-term mission are gleaned from personal testimony from national church workers and career missionaries, readings, and the author’s successes and failures as a single-term foreign missionary and as a leader of and advisor for congregational short-term mission teams.

arriving materially or metaphorically empty-handed or unprepared to make meaningful contributions in mission with hosts. What is the nature of the emptiness to be offered in short-term mission? It is not a yawning consumer appetite seeking adventure and self-improvement at the novel hands of others. Quite the opposite, it is a mortification of all the selfish appetites in order that that one might be shaped and filled by Christ for humble service to his beloved world: “Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.” The empty-handed mission team is at best a ministry opportunity for receiver-hosts and at worst a disappointment and a drain.

Autonomous mission is another oxymoron that is seen in the short-term missions movement. For many reasons, increasingly the wider church has been left out as individuals and congregations plan trips independently and make contact with partners or hosts directly.<sup>57</sup> The project or destination selected may result from diverse sources of inspiration such as a personal contact, a story in the media, an interest in a specific country or culture, particular skills to be used, an invitation. The mission team may create goals for themselves by themselves; such a monologue rather than dialogue results in presumptuous offerings for others that are thinly veiled personal desires. In some cases there is no partner or host identified and any local church in the community of service is not consulted. In other cases the national or local church is used for the mission team’s aims with disregard for the call and ministry of those on the ground. Mission agencies that have a superior-subordinate relationship with churches on the field, Engel and Dyrness write, “are tempted to view the local church on the field as simply a

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<sup>57</sup> Jeffrey, 5.



convenient vehicle through which their own evangelistic aspirations are to be fulfilled.”<sup>58</sup> The result of such disconnected “ministry” can range from inappropriate initiatives and irrelevant offerings, to unsustainable programs, and even the undermining – rather than building up - of the witness and ministry of the local church.

On the other end of the spectrum, those who are working with partners and yet are self-centered insensitively may make excessive demands of receiver hosts. The costs and sacrifices to receive visiting mission teams are usually far greater than most teams have imagined. Physical needs include housing, food and transportation that may be very different from those to which a group from North America or the suburbs is accustomed. It is not unheard of for missionaries to gobble up in a day the best of rations with little or no appreciation of how precious they are. Social and emotional costs are involved in the offering of hospitality as receiver hosts may have to pause ministry and family activities in order to make preparations and then welcome, partner with, and even entertain the visitors. This may be especially demanding with visitors who are jet lagged, culturally disoriented, giddy or anxious. There are spiritual demands as well, if missionaries come seeking spiritual nourishment or experience moments of personal crisis precipitated by a challenging context. Receiver hosts may find themselves making difficult accommodations for misguided activities billed as “mission” for the sake of forging and maintaining relationships. They may be subject to paternalism by those who want to “do for” or who do not come willing to work in a submissive relationship with the national or local church leadership. Receiver hosts also take risks with the witness and ministry they

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<sup>58</sup> Engel and Dyrness, 76.

have established in their own communities, and will reap the blessings or suffer the damage of the visiting team long after the team has left.

Paternalism in mission has done much damage over centuries, and short-term missionaries are unwittingly continuing this practice. There may be an assumption by missionaries that what would be best for all people is modernization and westernization so that people everywhere might enjoy a North American lifestyle. On one mission trip led by the author, mission team members were moved by the sight of shoeless children to independently propose organizing a shoe-sending program for the host ministry. When the national host worker politely suggested that that was not necessary and other needs were more urgent, a cultural assumption of the team was revealed: that being shod was a critical necessity. This assumption then informed a prescription. Development projects conceived of in paternalism may be unwelcome or unneeded from the perspective of the community in question. Carried out, such projects may encourage dependency or create resentment. Again, for missionaries it is pleasant to feel that one has power and means to effect change. This kind of gratification encourages short-term missionaries to make easy peace with the dependency that hosts may experience toward missionaries when materials are prescribed for projects which only the missionary can provide.

When there are dynamics in a short-term mission of dependency or unequal power, self-centered missionaries may practice denial and perpetuate the imbalance and injustice. Allen Mitsuo Wakabayashi describes playing a game of “Modified Monopoly,” in which uneven rules ensured the emergence of advantaged and disadvantaged players who experienced a widening gulf of prosperity. His observation in

playing the game was that when advantaged - and compassionate - players realized what was happening, they would practice charity, such as waiving rent or extending loans. What did not happen was a questioning of the rules. Everyone went along with the framework of “how the game is played.”<sup>59</sup> Self-centered missionaries are unlikely to see their wealth, or their control and wielding of their wealth in the face of poverty, as a problem. Jonathan Bonk writes, “It is hard to behave like a servant when you are rich and powerful, while those whom you serve are poverty stricken and weak. In such situations, it is common to redefine the word ‘service’ to mean whatever we are inclined to do for someone else.”<sup>60</sup> He observes, “Missionary wealth almost inevitably affects interpersonal relationships in at least six ways, each of which is antithetical to all that Christ modelled (*sic*) for his followers”: insulation, isolation, an unbridgeable social gulf, social disparity and the illusion of superiority, distrust, envy and hostile relationships.<sup>61</sup> Christ-centered mission is not the stuff of paternalism and wealth. Bonk describes three categories of “most potent of Christian weapons”: “the *incarnation*, the *cross*, and *weakness*.”<sup>62</sup>

The negative impact of self-centered missionaries is not felt just on fields of service and by receiver hosts. The short-term mission team or program can have the power to shape an entire congregation’s understanding of mission. How the team approaches mission – either guided by or independent of the congregation - will determine whether

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<sup>59</sup> Allen Mitsuo Wakabayashi, *Kingdom Come: How Jesus Wants to Change the World*, (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 93.

<sup>60</sup> Jonathan Bonk, *Missions and Money*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 52.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 44ff.

<sup>62</sup> Bonk, “Mission and the Problem of Affluence,” *Toward the Twenty-First Century*, 302.

or not their practice of mission has missiological, ecclesiological, and theological integrity. Because theology is experiential their practice of mission will shape their theology, including their understanding of their identities as missionaries – and disciples. Over time, this understanding is likely to be shared by the congregation as well. The orientation of short-term missionaries has impact on the sending congregation or community.

### **Whom Shall I Send?**

To send volunteer missionaries on their way with self-centered motives and goals is to sacrifice integrity in answering Christ's call. It is like feeling virtuous for giving away old clothes which had been taking up needed space in one's home; the self is served in an act called Christian charity. In fact love has not been served, only pride. In self-centered mission the God who is on a mission to gather up his beloved creation is not served. The witness is not true –self is exalted rather than Christ and there is no invitation to kingdom life. Others are not served. Those who would be served or who would enjoy partnership in service may be entertained by watching the exercise, or may be offended, insulted or injured. They are not drawn in to communion in Christ, encouraged in communion in Christ, or empowered for their participation in Christ's mission. Finally, and ironically, self-centered missionaries do not serve even themselves well. They are impoverished by being allowed to believe that a venture in recreation or travel or self-improvement is God's call for them. They will not be drawn closer to Christ, and they will not know the worship, joy and privilege of serving God's aims in mission.

To turn away Christians with self-centered motives from mission also is to compromise Christ's call.<sup>63</sup> Christ's call to mission is for every one who is baptized by the Holy Spirit, every person who may be called a disciple. To serve the mission of God is not just every Christian's birthright, it is a given vocation. That vocation is not dependent upon skill or intelligence or maturity or degree of sanctification. God chooses the foolish and weak things of the world to accomplish his glorious purposes. If there were any doubt of this just the briefest consideration of the first twelve disciples whom Jesus called to himself and sent out should illustrate this truth. Very ordinary and fallible human beings were called by the Lord for communion and mission. They were those who as often as not misunderstand his teaching, who publicly denied him, who asked for side-by-side thrones, who fell asleep during prayer vigils, who ran away when presented with critical moments for witness. Jesus said, "I have come to call not the righteous but sinners." (Mark 2:18) The apostle Paul describes the humility in the call of Christians:

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters; not many were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God.

What ought to be done with the entirely too-human and disoriented short-term missionary? The rest of the Scripture passage provides direction: "He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

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<sup>63</sup> Christians *are* sent by Christ on the basis of vocation and identity – whether they know it or not they are on their way. The "sending" referred to here is the sending of individuals by a congregation for a particular mission.

(I Corinthians 26-31). Orientation to Christ is an answer. The self cannot be the center of authentic mission. The Lord who calls disciples to himself, and then sends them out to share in his mission, must be the focal point; missionaries must locate themselves in relationship to Christ to become effective in Christ's mission.

### **Christ at the Center**

Discipleship is essential to mission. Discipleship necessarily includes communion with Christ, and in this relationship Christ is known to be at the center of mission. This recognition of Jesus at the center of mission is not just an academic or intellectual exercise; it is a spiritually transforming one. Therefore preparing for mission is not a matter of programming. A certain amount of planning and programming will necessarily happen. But the source, the substance, the power of mission is spiritual and divine. True mission emerges from this possession of Christ's disciples by the Spirit of Christ. Describing the community life of the early church in Acts 4, William Dyrness writes, "Now to see this as a political or social program is to miss the point Luke wishes to make. When one follows Christ and receives his power from above, he or she spontaneously shares with others (remember, a disciple in Luke's writings is someone who leaves everything)."<sup>64</sup> Communion with God in Christ results in an irrepressible and joyful desire to call others to such a communion. Awe filled worship of God forms words and deeds proclaiming his glory. Humble love of God, and reception of his love, engenders active love of all those beloved by him. To neglect the personal relationship

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<sup>64</sup> William Dyrness, *Let the Earth Rejoice: A Biblical Theology of Holistic Mission* (Westchester, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1983), 156-7.

between disciple and Lord is to cut the heart out of mission and allow it to become something other than the mission of the loving God who gathers us.

As Jesus reinstates Peter, he restores the unity between body and soul, communion and action. Just as Peter three times denied Christ in a spirit of self-preservation, three times Jesus asks him to profess his love, and three time he renews his commission to ministry, to mission. Jesus again summons Peter to a particular orientation: “follow me,” and devotion and service are united:

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.” A second time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.” (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, “Follow me.” (John 21:15-19, NRSV)

James Engel and William Dyrness interpret the exchange in this way:

Though seldom understood as an instruction about missions, this poignant exchange between Peter and his Lord may contain the most important element of the Christian’s commission. *Here Christ calls those who follow him to be certain that all they do – their “following” – flows from a deep-seated and irrevocable love for the Lord.*”(emphasis original) <sup>65</sup>

Discipleship, or spiritual formation for mission, is not only about following in the way of Jesus, but following in relationship with Jesus. More than being like Jesus in mission, it is being with Jesus in mission. It is critical for mission participants to understand and experience the difference between doing good deeds like Jesus would

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<sup>65</sup> Engel and Dyrness, 36.

(WWJD - What Would Jesus Do?), and participating with the living Lord in his coming kingdom – what *is* Jesus doing? The former is an overwhelming labor of works; the latter a vocational experience of grace. Both may be undertaken for the glory of God, but only the latter recognizes and experiences that “...I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Mt. 28:20) To be in mission is to be transformed by the Spirit of Christ:

It is deeply damaging to the church and its members to suppose that we can transform the world if we are unwilling to be transformed personally. What hope have we to offer, what new life do we witness to, if our own hearts are not being made new by God? Jesus’ own example reveals that the clarity of a single person who is transparent to the Spirit has more impact in God’s design than the best theological teachings and most ambitious social ministries.<sup>66</sup>

Thomas Merton wrote of the spiritual substance of Christians palpable to the world:

“What we are to do at present is not so much speak of Christ as to let him live in us so that people may find him by feeling how he lives in us.”<sup>67</sup>

### **Abdicating the Throne**

In discipleship, the self is necessarily dethroned in the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Abdication is not just deference but - biblically - death. The call to discipleship, the call to Christ, is one to die. When Peter was recommissioned, Jesus referred to his literal martyrdom (“He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.”). However, for all disciples, there is a spiritual death represented in the denial of self. Those who are in Christ are baptized into his death as well as his resurrection.

While the primary metaphor for mission held by many teams is represented in the image

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<sup>66</sup> Marjorie J. Thompson, *Soul Feast* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 16.

<sup>67</sup> Steve Shussett, quoting Thomas Merton in Hungry Hearts, Vol. No. 3, (Fall 2002), p. 1.



of going, a truer and more practical image to hold in mind may be that of dying. No doubt it is a startling image, but it is a scripturally faithful corrective to the self-centeredness that many bring to mission.

In the paradox that is the Christian life, it is only in dying to self that the self is served. There is little doubt that much of the good fruit that has come of short-term missions is seen in the lives of those who are sent. Many and perhaps most perspectives published on the value of short-term missions focus on the shaping of the short-term mission participant. Some studies suggest that short-term mission participants become more culturally sensitive, interested in the world, engaged in further world mission activities. They may pray more often and give more money than they did prior to their short-term mission, and are more likely to become career missionaries.<sup>68</sup> They value the experience themselves. Commonplace reflections such as, “I received much more than I could give,” or, “God used this as a turning point in my life” are confirmation that these experiences are formative. However, though God should so bless short-term missionaries in such manner, it does not follow that short-term missions should be engaged in with a primary goal of such blessing. Mission is but one aspect in which any disciple discovers Jesus’ meaning: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.” (Mt. 16:24-26) And, “Whoever wants to become great

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<sup>68</sup> Daniel P. McDonough and Roger P. Peterson, *Can Short-term mission Really Create Long-Term Career Missionaries?* (Minneapolis: STEM Ministries, 1999). And Roger P Peterson, project director, *Is Short-Term Mission Really Worth the Time and Money?* (Minneapolis: STEM Ministries, 1991). Priest et. al. contend that in fact actual practice did not support the changes that short-term missionaries self reported.

among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:43-45) Jonathan Bonk describes this, “Missiological plans, policies, practices, and ambitions must move away from their essentially self-serving character to reflect once again the incarnation.”<sup>69</sup> That is communion, and that is mission. Disciples do not set out first to find their lives in service. Disciples rather go about losing their lives for Christ. It also so happens that only in doing so do disciples receive the kind of life that Christ alone can give.

### **Getting Oriented**

Discipling missionaries will nurture a deepened relationship with Christ; discipling missionaries also then will grow their effectiveness in mission. Orientation for short-term missionaries is one way to go about such discipling. Most short-term mission teams include programs of orientation for their members. Many of these programs spend the majority of the time on logistical arrangements and familiarizing participants with the people, work, and culture they will encounter. However, there are other issues to which to attend in mission preparation. There are also other definitions for the word “orient” worth considering in regard to mission and discipleship. “To orient” can mean to position something in relationship to a point of reference. Orienting missionaries can be helping them see their position in relationship to Jesus – it is Jesus whom they are following in mission. To orient can also mean to give direction. Missioners can learn that they are a part of God’s gathering in – to send out – to gather yet more in. Finally,

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<sup>69</sup> Bonk, “Mission and the Problem of Affluence,” *Toward the Twenty-First Century*, 305.

“orienting” can mean to point. Missioners can be pointed toward Christ and his kingdom, and learn that the heart of the mission in the world is to point others toward the same. This kind of orientation is heard in Hebrews:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

This may be a new concept for those who are accustomed to focusing on tasks in the approach of and preparation for mission. A culture that encourages a task-orientation, a weak theology of mission or discipleship, and abundant modeling of strictly practical orientation will impress mission teams. It is seen and understood that a team must get passports, arrange accommodations, pack suitcases, gather supplies, and raise funds in order to engage in short-term mission. It is not always perceived or understood that a team must worship God, abide in Christ, listen for the Holy Spirit, pray faithfully, proclaim the gospel in some clear fashion, and submit to one another and those (with) whom they serve in order to engage in short-term mission. And so for many congregations, preparation for missions consists in signing up, raising funds, attending several meetings and “going.” The orientation meetings may be opened with a prayer and a brief devotional, and then the real business of the mission trip is taken up – deposit deadlines, immunizations, travel itineraries, packing lists, perhaps some team building, cross-cultural education and learning of foreign language phrases.

Many tasks in fact do need to be completed in the months leading up to a mission trip, and discipling may be neglected in a full schedule, or it may be assumed. Mission

trip leaders may depend upon discipling that has happened in other contexts, and see mission trips as application – action time.<sup>70</sup> Discipling apart from the mission team orientation should not be counted upon. Church membership is not synonymous with discipleship, and even for those who have been otherwise disciplined, Christian formation is not complete at a given point in life.<sup>71</sup>

Orientation for mission needs to begin with orientation to Jesus. Tim Dearborn, a mission team leader who confessed to being a recovering “mission fanatic,” urges those preparing for mission to focus on Christ: “God calls us to a growing commitment to a Person, our Lord Jesus Christ, not a growing commitment to a task, even one as admirable as mission.”<sup>72</sup> Thoughtful plans that encourage the nurture of this kind of relationship ought to be part of mission team orientation. Nurturing activities can include disciplines and practices that are classic in the church: Scripture study and meditation, prayer, journaling, worship, fasting, service. Individual and communal prayerful

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<sup>70</sup> Mission literature reflects these kinds of assumptions. In the review of the literature it is seen that among prominent missiologists and theologians there is extensive consideration given to the importance of holism in the objectives of the church’s missions, often the holding together of evangelism and social transformation. At times the importance of discipling those who are the recipients of mission ministry is stressed. But while great pains are taken to talk about mission objectives and approaches and means, there are only passing references to the spiritual formation and nurture of the missionaries themselves. The discipling of the disciplers, or missionaries, seems to be taken for granted, and the conversation is taken up at the point of how these servants are to go forth in mission, and not from where they have come. It may be assumed that missionaries are the beneficiaries of the kinds of mission that they are described as ideally carrying out. Or it may be assumed that nurture for mission is covered in other fields – Christian education, or general spiritual formation. However, Christian formation, or discipleship, has such an important influence on the objectives, approaches and means of missionaries (and perhaps especially short-term missionaries), it cannot be assumed or taken for granted. Especially in a day when there is a great cry for the church to be missional, there ought to be abundant conversation about the relationship between Christian nurture and mission.

<sup>71</sup> See Stephen Mortley, “Foundations for Spiritual Formation in Adults” (D.Min. thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 1995).

<sup>72</sup> Tim Dearborn, *Beyond Duty: A Passion for Christ, a Heart for Mission* (Monrovia, California: MARC, 1997), vi.

meditation on Scripture can be especially helpful for missionaries who are not well oriented to Christ. One example of such a program is presented in chapter four. Whatever the specific approach might be, the program of orientation for short-term missionaries should intentionally cultivate communion with Christ. Richard Peace's vision for evangelism may also be applied to mission:

Conscious effort at spiritual formation as part of one's training to be an evangelist and as part of one's lifestyle as an evangelist would yield a depth of spirituality that would impact positively the world of evangelism...What would evangelism itself look like if it sprang from an ongoing encounter with God? ...what if the very desire to reach out to others was born first in the fire of contemplative prayer where the presence of God was so palpable that one could not help but want to share this reality with others?<sup>73</sup>

Preparation for short-term mission can be something that either caters to small and self-centered hopes and consumer desires, or it can be a God-glorifying opportunity to help all Christians live more fully into their baptism as they follow Christ into kingdom work. If the church were to respond with serious discipling and equipping for the millions of people who step forward each year to participate in short-term mission, a great good would be accomplished for the work of the kingdom - and a relational God would be enjoyed and glorified.

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<sup>73</sup> Peace, Richard, "Evangelism and Spiritual Formation," *Theology, News and Notes* Fall, 2004, 11-12.

### CHAPTER 3

#### A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As the short-term missions movement has grown so rapidly, a challenge has been ensuring theological grounding for the burgeoning number of programs. The literature applying missional theology to the practice of short-term mission is just now beginning to develop. Few major missiologists have written on short-term mission in particular. Robert J. Priest, Terry Dischinger, Steve Rasmussen and C.M. Brown have written that the movement “is a grassroots and populist phenomenon almost completely divorced from scholarship, from missiology, and from seminary education.”<sup>74</sup> Those who are writing on short-term mission are often practitioners – pastors, missionaries, mission agency workers – and they commonly draw from more general works when reflecting on the place and practice of short-term mission in *missio Dei*. The first part of this review, therefore, will consider broader writing on mission by theologians representing diverse perspectives. These theologians are included for the hearing they receive in the contexts in which the project in chapter four was developed, and/or for their interest in holistic mission. Particular attention will be given to views related to formation for mission and the relationship between “body and soul” in mission.

If there is a dearth texts on short-term mission that fully develop a theology, there are even fewer that offer substantial resources for discipleship or spiritual formation with

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<sup>74</sup> Priest, et. al., 434.

mission in view.<sup>75</sup> The prevalence of texts and workshops on short-term mission that primarily address topics other than discipleship - site arrangements, travel tips, team building, cultural preparation, fund raising - illustrates and perhaps encourages the deficiencies seen in the approach and practice of some short-term mission. Nevertheless, a trickle of Bible study guides and books including chapters on devotional preparation is growing along with the call for serious spiritual equipping for short-term missionaries. The second part of this review will briefly evaluate several of the more readily available resources created for short-term mission team preparation.

### **Theology of Mission**

In the last generation, and in the wake of world-wide conversations that have included disparate definitions of mission, there has been a commitment expressed in diverse missiological schools to articulate a theology of mission that is drawn from the whole of scripture, and that ministers the whole gospel. The writers below share interest in a biblical theology and holistic practice of mission. Their points of agreement contribute to a sound theological foundation from which to approach short-term mission. They identify or assume God as the source of mission, they describe authentic mission in the church as being in service to *missio Dei*, and they urge looking to Scripture and especially Christ in discerning the Christian's vocation in mission. Several articulate that which the others at least assume and discuss Christian formation, or personal understanding of Christian vocation, in relationship to mission. At the same time, their

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<sup>75</sup> When crossing "mission" or "short-term mission" with "discipleship" or "spiritual formation" in the ALTA database at various times between 2003 and 2006, only approximately 35 matches appeared, and less than five of these were relevant reading regarding short-term missionaries.

diverse starting places, and in some cases unresolved differences, are also instructive.

They challenge one neither to dilute “mission” down to everything the church may do, nor to define it so narrowly that the gospel is truncated one way or another. Studying this point of tension can help missionaries clarify their understanding of mission and ensure that they are listening to the whole of the gospel as they consider their own discipleship as well as their participation in the mission for which Christ has commissioned them.

### William A. Dyrness

William Dyrness is dean of the school of theology and professor of theology and culture at Fuller Theological Seminary. He has served as a missionary and two of his books directly address mission, *Let the Earth Rejoice*, and *Changing the Mind of Missions: Where Have We Gone Wrong?* (co-authored with James F. Engel). Dyrness writes for the lay evangelical reader who is fearful that the elevation of social concerns will detract and distract from a biblical understanding of mission. His theology of holistic mission is an argument for the necessary physical and relational embodiment of the soul in mission, answering the question of “whether there is a biblical warrant for seeing a political and social dimension to our missions and evangelism.”<sup>76</sup> The scriptural title of his theology of mission, *Let The Earth Rejoice!*, points to the purposes of the God whose kingdom activity is for the redemption of the whole of a beloved creation. Three of the themes present in Dyrness’ theology are especially relevant to this study: personal relationship, the material world, and the connection between faith and action.

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<sup>76</sup> Dyrness, 3.



## **Personal Relationship**

In presenting a biblical theology of mission, Dyrness begins by pointing to personal relationship - communion - as the goal of creation. Creator and creature are of course bound up in an intimate relationship: creation is brought into being by a communication of God, a personal word. Dyrness describes the Sabbath of God in terms of relationship; the creating God's rest is not pause but a turning to the creature in expectation of a response. God intends that "his creature may now become his people."<sup>77</sup>

The way Dyrness goes on to frame the redemption narrative, or "kingdom drama" consistently returns to this perspective of relationship. When the creature chooses to relate to creation apart from God, judgment necessarily follows. Yet the very first word of God in response to the fall is a question that already expresses a desire for restored relationship: "Where are you?" Before the Exodus and through the prophets, the crying out of the people to the God who hears them is evidence of a continuing, though marred, personal relationship. The wandering in the wilderness is a defining experience that instructs in dependent relationship. The incarnation is "a personal intervention of God himself that was to lead to a new intimacy of relationship with his people," this access symbolized by the tearing of the curtain in the temple at Jesus' death. And when the commission was given to his disciples with the promise, "Lo, I am with you always..." the goal of God to dwell with his people is heard. This communion reaches fulfillment in the New Jerusalem seen in Revelation.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 28.

Dyrness takes care to describe nature of the relationship between God and people as personal not just from God's side, but also from the human side in response to God in the person of Jesus:

The Kingdom Calls for a Personal Response. ...this reality (the kingdom) is something that can be missed; one must make a proper response to it (remember that where there was not faith, Jesus could do no mighty work).

The response must always focus on the person of Jesus. In his day (and ours!) entering the kingdom had to do with the stance that one took toward him (see Matt. 11:6). Faith had to be placed in him in order to experience the power of the kingdom.<sup>78</sup>

### **The Material World**

Dyrness describes God's will for relationship not just between God and creation, and God and humanity, but also between human beings and between humanity and the rest of creation. The neglect of this last relationship is a particular concern that Dyrness addresses throughout the text. The raw material of dust for the creation of humanity speaks not of humble origins but of organic unity within the whole of creation. It also expresses the divine intent that human spiritual life and worship would find expression in an embodied, material context. There is a profound interdependence between people and the rest of creation that recalls the providence of God. Air and water and food, bread and wine even, are the stuff of life.

The land is of special interest, described as one of the "protagonists" in the redemption story. First entrusted to the stewardship of Adam and Eve, it appears repeatedly at key points, such as the covenant promises of Abraham. Israel understood the significance of the land; when the land was lost, all was lost. Their sins had separated

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 136.

them from the land and from God. Furthermore, humanity and the land share in the destructive effects of sin. The land becomes defiled and barren, depicted in Leviticus 18 as vomiting out its inhabitants. It is not just humanity which needs redemption and renewal, but the land as well. “As (God) began with one man to reach the world, so he begins with one land to renew to whole; and the one program cannot be separated from the other.”<sup>79</sup> As tightly bound up with humanity as creation is in the fall, so also it is in the plan of redemption, the coming of the kingdom. Dyrness argues that a more accurate translation of II Peter 3:10 describes that at the judgment the earth will be “discovered” or “laid bare” rather than “burned up” by fire. With this view, fire, as elsewhere in scripture, has a purifying and cleansing effect. The kingdom perfects, rather than destroys, creation.<sup>80</sup>

While the land is a major figure in the drama, Dyrness is concerned with the whole of the material world. When the kingdom was announced by Christ, there was good news for every aspect of creation. Dyrness lifts up the miracles of Jesus not as sermon illustrations but as proclamation of a renewed and restored creation in their own right. And Jesus’ teaching and preaching on human communities and institutions made clear that these worldly bodies, too, are to be redeemed and transformed in the kingdom. In his study of Revelation Dyrness argues that the final struggle that reveals the fullness of Jesus’ victory will have a political and social dimension. Therefore works done to feed the hungry and liberate the oppressed, kingdom impact on institutions and society, will have temporal and eternal meaning and value.

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 134.

## **Faith and Action**

If relationship is the goal of creation, and if the whole of the material world is the context in which it has pleased God for that relationship to be made manifest, then it follows that faith must be practical and active. This theme, also, Dyrness highlights consistently throughout a biblical survey. In the creation account, “Adam and Eve are called at once to be responsible to God.” There is something to do in relationship with God and creation, a purpose involving action – to respond to God, to fill and rule the earth. Dyrness quotes Harry Kuitert: “We cannot see God in man while man stands still.”<sup>81</sup>

For those who would protest that Dyrness has made the case for communion as humanity’s purpose, he responds: “In the Bible, knowing God is not a mystical insight but a concrete response to his call. To know God is to do his will.”<sup>82</sup> Dyrness points to this truth throughout the Bible. He describes the law given for the purpose of protecting relationship with God. “Knowing” is synonymous with acknowledgment by keeping the requirements of treaty or covenant. “Their response then was both the means of their knowing God, and the way they would make him known to the world. To respond to God is to seek and reflect him in our concrete life.”<sup>83</sup> In the new covenant, written on the heart, this connection between knowing and doing is still seen; that “they will all know the Lord” will be evident by covenant keeping. Therefore repentance is a complete

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 63.

reorientation evident in a kingdom lifestyle, and discipleship is devotion seen and practiced in mission. In the great commission in Matthew, the importance of teaching along with baptizing is that new disciples might “know” the Lord – that Jesus’ lordship might be observed in obedience.

Just as Jesus’ miracles proclaimed the restoration of the material world, his teaching on God’s provision for human needs and intention for human community make clear that the actions of feeding the hungry and liberating the oppressed are works of the kingdom of God. Thus such actions are part and parcel of the mission of God. The new relationship made possible between God and humanity in Christ will always be manifest in action. Reading this portion of Dyrness’ theology brings to mind Jesus’ startling teaching on relationship and action:

Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside asking for you.” And he replied, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” And looking at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.” (Mark 3:31-35 NRSV)

The obedience and mission into which humanity is called is not just duty but participation in the glorious work of God’s kingdom: “...God’s ultimate purpose involves a project combining God, his people, and the created order in a single reality in which his glory will be fully and completely manifest.”<sup>84</sup>

Each of these three themes speaks to missionaries. Restoration of the intimate and loving relationship for which God has made humanity is at the heart of the mission of God and thus the church’s mission. The church, and her members, share good news not

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 14.

just by inviting others to respond personally to Jesus, but also by bearing personal witness to new life in Christ. Dyrness ably makes the case for God's redemptive intentions for the whole of creation. In this missionaries are encouraged to value the whole world as within the scope of God's interest, to understand good deeds as part of the proclamation of the gospel and as having eternal value to the kingdom. Finally, Dyrness' contention that there is no faith without action challenges every Christian to look and reach outward: "Mission is vital to theology because it is the point where faith and strategy come together, where our faith becomes directed toward the world in a specific way."<sup>85</sup>

James F. Engel and William A. Dyrness

In *Changing the Mind of Missions: Where Have We Gone Wrong?*, James F.

Engel and William A. Dyrness argue that western missions are in serious trouble in large part because most people in the (western) church are still operating with a worldview shaped by modernity. As a result the missions of many congregations are floundering. Several problems are of particular concern to the authors: There is a mistaken assumption that mission flows from a center of power and privilege to the periphery of the impoverished and powerless. Rationalism and optimism have framed missions as a technical program to be managed. Individualism has resulted in the privatization of a faith that is not engaged in the world; this split between the private and the public is evident in the divide between evangelism and social transformation in the church's practice of mission. On this last point they speak especially to those evangelicals who

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 11.

have given up on the transformation of the world and are focused on saving souls as efficiently as possible before the end comes.

Engel and Dyrness hail the postmodern movement as a time of opportunity for the renewal of western missions. Religious truth is receiving renewed respect and is increasingly seen as having relevance for all of life. The acknowledgment of evil in the world has diminished hope in human potential. There is a growing thirst for community. Finally, the church has begun to think of God as a missionary God.<sup>86</sup> As the efforts shaped by an outdated paradigm are increasingly anemic, and as a postmodern worldview encourages a restlessness that can be used for good, Dyrness and Engel urge the church to adapt radically – to be transformed - to a new understanding and practice of mission, a “kingdom paradigm.”<sup>87</sup> This mission must be:

1. Sensitive to the initiative of God
2. Motivated by a vision of the reign of Christ as refracted through multiple cultures of the world
3. Characterized by mutual sharing from multiple centers of influence, and
4. Committed to partnership and collaboration.<sup>88</sup>

This type of mission, they say, will result from a needed return to a biblical faithfulness, reflecting the holistic missionary interests of God heard in the gospel of Jesus. Luke 4 is the prime articulation of this holistic gospel.

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<sup>86</sup> Engel and Dyrness, 175.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 89.

The calls of greatest urgency that Engel and Dyrness make are to mutuality and holism in mission. In regard to holism, there are two themes throughout the book that are of particular relevance for the thesis at hand; those are the need for discipleship in the way of Christ, and overcoming the modern public/private divide.

### **Discipleship in the Way of Christ**

In order to rediscover a true mandate for mission, Engel and Dryness urge a return to the Word written and incarnate. They describe an abandonment of a biblical foundation for mission,<sup>89</sup> “It is our contention that this increasingly meager harvest of kingdom righteousness reflects a Westernized theology and practice of world missions that has deviated from its historic biblical roots.”<sup>90</sup> They go on to urge a careful searching of the scriptures in order to discern the *missio Dei* as revealed in Jesus: “The only hope for change is to start once again with the agenda of a *missionary God*, expressed through the life and words of his Son.”<sup>91</sup> Throughout, they emphasize that mission is still Jesus’ possession, and is carried out by Jesus’ followers in Jesus’ authority and by Jesus’ power.

Engel and Dyrness identify discipleship as exegeted from the Great Commission as one of the core values of a new missiology that is biblically faithful.<sup>92</sup> They lament throughout the book what Dallas Willard has called “the great omission in the Great

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 36-37.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 149.



Commission” – the absence of discipleship in mission, resulting in the making of “*converts* and not *disciples*.”<sup>93</sup> Evangelism apart from discipleship is incomplete mission and of itself, and it also forms Christians who are not prepared to offer their lives in active service under the sovereign Lordship of Christ: “This message (Luke 4) then and now calls for nothing less than a complete (and sacrificial) commitment of our whole lives and the subsequent transformation of all our ways of thinking and living. In short, we are called – then and now – to be his *disciples*.”<sup>94</sup>

The call to such a radical discipleship is presented not just with concern for the goal of mission, but also for the personal vocation of those in mission. Engel and Dyrness describe Jesus’ reinstatement of Peter as a version of the Great Commission. They link Peter’s recommissioning to his profession of love for Christ. “*Here Christ calls those who follow him to be certain that all they do – their “following” – flows from a deep-seated and irrevocable love for the Lord.*”<sup>95</sup> To love Jesus is to feed his sheep; to so love and serve is to follow him. This is incarnational life in the way of the Trinity. The connection between heart and hand is fixed: “Missions flows from the heart of a people who have been transformed by the Holy Spirit and who leave all to follow Christ.”<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 34.

### **Breaking Down the Modern Private/Public Divide**

Engel and Dyrness' call to total discipleship is reflected in their discussion of modernity. One of the main sources for the malaise in western missions today is the adoption of a modern world-view by those within the church. In particular they are concerned with the privatization of faith and an eschatology that values only the soul. "Making disciples involves much more than encouraging people to accept certain truths about God and to begin attending church. It involves a total transformation of the heart and life that involves a righteousness that impacts not only individuals but families, communities and nations."<sup>97</sup>

They attribute fundamentalist or evangelical disengagement with the world to an eschatology that despairs of meaningful social transformation. Recounting the split between the liberal and conservative branches of the church in the early twentieth century, they address the evangelical side of the community that has emerged today. Critical of silence on issues of social justice, of despair for social transformation, and of narrow hopes in evangelism, they urge reclaiming a gospel that has implications beyond the saving of individual souls. An evangelism that does not include good news for the whole of life is not true to the One who, in his own ministry and the ministry of his disciples, demonstrated the kingdom through action and *then* preached as people responded to promising evidence.<sup>98</sup> "The reign of Christ demands biblical holism, which

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 65.

restores the indivisible unity between the personal and the public, between evangelism and social transformation.”<sup>99</sup>

Themes of discipleship and holism have obvious relevance for short-term missionaries. The tying of Peter’s profession of love for Christ with his recommissioning for Christ’s work is an excellent lesson for nurturing personal devotion in short-term missionaries. Regarding holism, in this book Engel and Dyrness are speaking to the evangelical side of a divide - the side in which refuge was sought in a personal and private faith to the neglect of social engagement. This thesis is addressed more to the inheritors of the liberal side of the divide – those who place their hopes in social transformation and may count this as the better part of the salvation - and piety - that is needed. Yet the call to holism in this text should be heard by those from the liberal perspective as well: A radical discipleship rooted in deep love for Christ leads to a hopeful and holistic view of mission.

In comparison with the others reviewed in this section, this text is more accessible for short-term missionaries and includes illustrations of congregations engaged in short-term missions in a very natural way. There is a seamlessness regarding modes of mission that leads one to believe mission, and being in mission, are determined by something other than a particular programmatic shape. The mention of short-term missions that is most deliberate points to the movement as having an especially relevant role in a new and vital paradigm for mission. Not only is short-term mission the best means by which to grow the vision of congregations for the mission of the church, but these are often some of the most useful offerings in mission which is carried out in partnership:

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 93.

Given today's realities it is clear that much that is done in missions must be specific, limited and targeted. A church in Africa needs help in lay leadership training; a church association in the Philippines calls for assistance in evangelism; a Central American church association wants help in rebuilding after a devastating hurricane. The need is frequently for short-term efforts, which many local churches are in the ideal position to provide.<sup>100</sup>

It is apparent from observations such as this one, and from the nature of mission as described by Engel and Dyrness, that the work of short-term missionaries, when carried out in the spirit described, can be an important contribution in the mission given to the church in service of *missio Dei*.

Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O'Brien

A second theology of mission identified as "biblical" is included in this review, *Salvation to the Ends of The Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* is written by Andreas Köstenberger and Peter T. O'Brien. Köstenberger is professor of New Testament at Southeastern Baptist Seminary and maintains a website called "Biblical Foundations" in which his concern for biblical Christianity is evident. O'Brien is a priest in the Anglican Church of Australia and is Senior Research Fellow in New Testament at Moore College. These two biblical scholars devote the entirety of their book to surveying the Bible, interpreting it as the story of God's mission for the salvation of a lost and rebellious world under judgment. "The goal of mission is the glory of God, that he may be known and honoured for who he really is."<sup>101</sup> In considering the glory of God, Köstenberger and O'Brien describe that there is no tension between God's glory and God's love; that God

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>101</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien, 52.

is moved to mission by love further glorifies him.<sup>102</sup> Two emphases from Köstenberger and O'Brien's theology, seen especially in their study of the gospel of John, are examined with application to orientation for mission: Jesus' continued activity in mission, and the relationship between Jesus and his disciples.

### **Jesus' Continuing Mission**

Central to this theology is the representation of Jesus in mission. "The Lord of the Scriptures is a missionary God who reaches out to the lost, and sends his servants, and particularly his beloved Son, to achieve his gracious purposes of salvation."<sup>103</sup> That particular Servant, who is sent and sends, who effects forgiveness and life through his death and resurrection, is the principal in the story. In their theology of mission, Köstenberger and O'Brien emphasize the heart of God's mission as the sending of Jesus, past and present. And so the mission of the church is "still essentially the sending of Jesus by the Father."<sup>104</sup> The church has no mission without abiding in Christ and participating in his mission. There is, therefore, necessarily great importance placed on looking to Jesus and recognizing his authority, presence and power in mission. Jesus is more than a reference point in mission; the mission is Jesus', and is carried out by Jesus:

The overarching implication for the mission of the contemporary church from the present study (of the gospel of John) is its *need to see itself more consciously in relation to the mission of Jesus*. The fourth evangelist conceived of the mission

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<sup>102</sup>Ibid., 208.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., 263.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 123, 158, 225, 264, 265.

of the Christian community as ultimately the mission of the *exalted* Jesus carried out through his followers.<sup>105</sup>

Köstenberger and O'Brien point out that John barely mentions the disciples, and even the Spirit, in mission other than in regard to participating in Jesus' mission; every mission is derivative of Jesus'.<sup>106</sup>

Several implications flow from the fact of Jesus' foundational mission leading to others being sent by him to engage in his mission. First, contemporary Christians need to recognize that the mission which really matters in God's sight is not theirs but that of Jesus. Matthew, Luke and John conceive of the mission of God's people as ultimately the mission of the exalted Jesus carried out by his followers in and through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Son who has been sent has not relinquished the ultimate control and direction of this mission (cf. Matt. 28:18-20).<sup>107</sup>

### **The Relationship of Jesus to his Disciples**

If it is given that Jesus continues to be sent in mission, and sent through the agency of the Spirit at work in the church, then the relationship between Jesus and his disciples is of great importance. Perhaps more than any of the other theologians represented here, Köstenberger and O'Brien pay serious attention to this relationship. They explicitly call for discipleship and a growing faith as "an indispensable prerequisite

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 224-225.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 266.

for mission.”<sup>108</sup> This close relationship is important for a number of reasons, all of interest to missionaries. One is that the world will identify Jesus’ disciples with Jesus himself:

Also pervasive is the principle of the close identification of Jesus’ messengers with their sender, Jesus, as they embark on their mission. In keeping with the Jewish concept of the *šāliah* (messenger), a man’s agent was considered to be like the man himself (*m. Ber.* 5:5). For better or worse, then, Jesus’ emissaries have thrown in their lot with their master; if people welcome him and his message, they will also receive his followers; If people reject Jesus, his followers will likewise be rejected (10:11-14, 40-42). Thus following Jesus entails radical discipleship. Anyone who would be his disciple must forsake all other ties and loyalties in favour of unreserved, committed allegiance to Jesus...and take up his cross....<sup>109</sup>

A close relationship between Jesus and his disciples is critical also because one cannot invitingly teach another about relationship to Jesus without having a personal knowledge of what such discipleship entails. “...successful disciple-making therefore presupposes the committed discipleship of the disciple-makers themselves.”<sup>110</sup>

Another reason that close relationship between Jesus and his followers is essential for mission has to do with spiritual abiding and presence in order for Jesus to carry out the mission. John 15 makes clear that disciples continue to be bound in a living relationship with Jesus by which they bear fruit, and that the Spirit mediates the actual presence of Jesus to them:

The special Johannine contribution to the theology of this mission is that the Father’s sending of the Son serves both as the model (the comparative aspect of *kathōs*) and the ground (the explanatory aspect of *kathōs*) for the Son’s sending of the disciples. Their mission is to continue the Son’s mission; and this requires

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 92-3.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 104.

that the Son must be present to them during this mission, just as the Father had to be present to the Son during his mission (R.E. Brown 1970: 1036).<sup>111</sup>

The theology of Köstenberger and O'Brien is a strong support for the essential place of discipleship for missionaries. This is heard especially in regard to the ongoing possession of mission by Jesus, and the necessary abiding of disciples in Christ in order to participate in that mission. One cannot "do mission" outside of this relationship.

### Lesslie Newbigin

Lesslie Newbigin is an internationally recognized missiologist. He served as a minister in the United Reformed Church (U.K.), was active in the World Council of Churches, and had extensive missionary experience in India. *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission* is just one of numerous missions texts produced in Newbigin's lifetime. *The Open Secret* is a series of lectures prepared in the 1970's to equip missionaries with a theological foundation for mission service, and as such is an especially relevant selection when considering the preparation of short-term missionaries.

Like the other theologians reviewed here, Newbigin describes the division that was starkly evident in the 1960's and 1970's between ecumenicals and evangelicals regarding mission. That the nature of the church's mission would be such a burning question indicates a situation of promise. Newbigin begins his book with the hope to find a holistic understanding of mission freshly relevant to the modern world by looking to Scripture: "The present discussion is written in the hope of placing the debate in a broad

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 222, 251.



biblical perspective and in the hope that to do so will release new energies for the contemporary mission of the church, not only in its global dimensions but also in its application to the touch new paradigms of the contemporary Western world.”<sup>112</sup>

Of particular interest in Newbigin’s theology for the study at hand is the intimate relationship of Christians to God in mission. To a much greater degree than any other theologian considered here, Newbigin explores confession and the identity of the missionary: it is a most personal faith in a sovereign Lord out of which every disciple must bear witness. To that end, the themes of the sovereignty of the Trinitarian God in mission, the unity of faith and action, and the Christocentric nature of mission for disciples are highlighted.

### **The Sovereignty of a Trinitarian God in Mission**

Newbigin’s approach begins with grounding the authority for mission in Jesus – Jesus “who is the Son, sent by the Father and anointed by the Spirit to be the bearer of God’s kingdom to the nations.”<sup>113</sup> Understanding mission as the possession of the triune God, he goes on to describe mission as three actions related to the persons of the Trinity.

Proclaiming the kingdom of the Father is “faith in action.” Here Newbigin takes up the theology of people chosen to be bearers (and not exclusive beneficiaries) of the blessing of God. An increasingly small remnant becomes just one – Jesus, who bears consummate witness to the sovereign reign of God, especially in the cross. Proclaiming

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<sup>112</sup> Newbigin, 2.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 24.

liberation through Christ's suffering – the paradox of the cross – is the “ultimate parable” – a gospel for the entire world which is yet secret because it is only understood by faith.

Sharing in the life of Jesus the Son is “love in action.” One cannot proclaim the kingdom without proclaiming the one in whom the kingdom is present – Jesus. Therefore sharing the gospel must be pointing to a personal presence, and response to God's kingdom is defined by one's response to the person Jesus. That Jesus binds his disciples to himself, and brings them into the kingdom life which they are called to proclaim, is clear in both the sacrament of baptism and the sacrament of communion. Because of this intimate relationship, Jesus' disciples, in him, bear personal witness to the world of the presence of the kingdom. Though the community of faith be sinful and weak, yet God has chosen this people to bear a gift for all. As with the cross, the paradox of the gospel is seen in God's reign graciously present among sinners: “as love shared among the unlovely.”<sup>114</sup>

Proclaiming the kingdom by the witness of the Spirit is “hope in action.” Jesus was conceived by the Spirit, anointed by the Spirit, empowered in ministry by the Spirit. After his death, resurrection and ascension, Jesus' disciples too were enabled to enter into life in the Spirit as they were baptized into Christ by water and the Spirit. The presence of the Spirit among those in Christ is sure promise of the kingdom fullness to come, and makes every disciple a witness. By the Spirit God continues to be sovereign in mission through servants whose witness is “derivative.” The authority and power ministered by the Spirit is the reason that God's mission is carried out through weak human vessels

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 54.

with certain success and often by surprising routes. This sovereign power of God's Spirit is where the church, and every disciple, finds hope in mission.

### **Unity of Faith and Action**

In addition to examining the sovereignty of God in mission within a Trinitarian framework, Newbigin also takes on the topic of God's justice. He insists on the unity of believing and following, faith and obedience, truth and action, preaching and action. Whenever there have been attempts by people of faith to narrow mission focus to evangelism and avoid entanglement in mere service, it is the "logic of the gospel" that continues to draw Christians to action. In the Christian faith dualism between body and soul cannot be maintained, and so the gospel has both personal and historical meaning:

The gospel is good news because in Jesus Christ God has dealt with sin and death, has opened a way that goes down into the chasm and leads out into the uplands beyond it, and has thereby released me from the dilemma in which I was trapped. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus have opened up a way on which I can travel toward the city, knowing that the end of the journey will be a real consummation both of my personal history and of the public history of which I have shared.<sup>115</sup>

In insisting on action that is with others rather than condescending to others, Newbigin examines liberation theology. He responds to liberation theologians with appreciation for reproofing theology that is only academic. However, he also criticizes their Marxist view of society, and insists that "the commitment is not to a cause or to a program: it is to a person. At the heart of mission there must always be the call to

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 105.

commitment to Jesus Christ in his community.”<sup>116</sup> This Christocentrism is heard throughout Newbigin’s text and is the third theme examined.

### **The Centrality of Christ**

The Christocentric emphasis of Newbigin’s theology, especially in his description of mission as confession of Christ, is the most significant contribution of this text in considering personal orientation in mission. As described above, Newbigin begins his theology with the question of the authority by which Christians engage in mission. That authority is unequivocally Jesus: “The authority of Jesus is not a derived authority; it is the authority of God himself present in the midst of human history.”<sup>117</sup> This kind of authority demands a commitment that supersedes all other commitments that human beings would make.

In addition to insisting on the authority of Christ in mission and in all of life, Newbigin takes care to describe that such an authority can only be appealed to as an act of faith: “My answer to this question (‘By what authority?’) is a personal commitment...My answer is a confession: I believe.”<sup>118</sup> And while the confession is personal, it is made by the grace of God: “I make this confession only because I have been laid hold of by Another and commissioned to do so. ...The origin of my confession is not in me. It is committed to me.”<sup>119</sup> This confession is then the proclamation of the

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 17.

gospel, the gospel that has been entrusted to those called by God to the nations. Here is seen the essential place of personal faith in Christ for the one who would participate in mission. Mission so described as confession is impossible without knowing oneself to be possessed by Christ:

It is useless to talk about the task if you are not concerned about the agency that is to carry out the task. We have to ask not only “What is to be done?” but also “Who is to do it?” The opening announcement of the gospel, “the kingdom of God is at hand,” is followed at once by a call addressed personally to Peter and Andrew, James and John, to follow Jesus and to share in the work of the kingdom. The calling of men and women to be converted, to follow Jesus, and to be part of his community is and must always be at the center of mission.<sup>120</sup>

This Christocentrism is present in Newbigin’s description of both the agency of mission and the goal of mission, for he insists that among the many tasks that may be included, discipling is the essential, specific one of the missionary; the goal of mission is that the nations would recognize the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Newbigin’s theology is compelling in its presentation of missional vocation: relationship to and reliance upon each member of the Trinity, the insistent holism of a gospel that gives hope for the individual and the world in which he or she lives, and the personal, confessional nature of witness are all described with earnest warmth. Though the original lectures were prepared for such, Newbigin is not writing to professional missionaries. He is writing to every Christian, and every Christian is called to bear joyful witness and claim the whole of the world for the Lord Jesus and the kingdom of God. While this understanding of “every Christian in mission” is present also among the other theologians, the extent to which Newbigin describes the personal faith out of which

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 121.

Christians engage in mission makes his theology especially useful for missional discipleship.

Darrell L. Guder et. al..

The authors of *Missional Church* are ministers and theologians from Reformed, Methodist, and Baptist denominations in Canada and the United States. Convinced that the church of North American is shaped more by post-Constantinian Christendom than a missional identity, they argue persuasively from Scripture and history that such a church is called to renew itself as “God’s instrument for God’s mission.” A helpful exploration of North American culture sets the context for the church’s task to proclaim the coming of God’s kingdom and live as a distinctive community reflecting God’s reign. Two themes in this text are examined below regarding formation for mission: that of mission as the church’s vocation, and the cultivation of communities of the Holy Spirit.

### **Mission as the Church’s Vocation**

The authors describe the North American church in such a crisis as can only be resolved spiritually and theologically – not methodically. That crisis, and answer, has to do with identity, “who we are and what we are for.”<sup>121</sup> The church does not exist for itself, but for the sake of witness to God’s kingdom; it is “blessed to be a blessing.” However, the current theology and structures of the church are not missional, and with the current ecclesiocentric perspective, mission becomes merely a program and the

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<sup>121</sup> Guder, 3.

church misses her purpose of being “God’s sent people.”<sup>122</sup> A radical reorientation is needed in which the *missio Dei* is the crucial construct.

In considering the church as “apostle” to the world, an important part of the church’s vocation is being holy. In holiness the church is distinguishable from the world with which it is engaged and to which it bears witness. It is called to “be transformed into the image of Christ,” which can only happen in relationship with Jesus Christ and the church.<sup>123</sup> In the church the world will see a new way of life – illustrated in distinct perspectives on things such as economics and power. Discerning the critical points of difference between itself and the world, demanded by the reign of God, will make the church a light; if being so different incurs suffering, the church’s witness is so part of her mission.

What may be most useful from both Guder’s introduction and George R. Hunsberger’s chapter, “Missional Vocation: Called and Sent to Represent the Reign of God,” is the call to reclaim a true missional vocation. The focus in this book is on the church’s vocation, and application may be made for congregations, mission teams, and every individual Christian in mission. Ecclesiocentric mission reduces mission to a program, while self-centered mission reduces *mission* to a trip or *service* to a project. A missional identity – for the church, and of course her members – is a matter of vocation, and requires a distinct theological orientation. Hunsberger contends that it is God’s

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>123</sup> Lois Barrett, 117.

calling and sending that determines the identity of the church.<sup>124</sup> It may also be said that it is Jesus' calling and sending that determines the identity of the disciple: "I will make you fishers of people." There are limits to the parallel between the church's vocation and individual personal vocation; the church is a temporary body and its function in God's mission may be especially essential to its identity, while there are biblical grounds upon which to make the case for communion borne of love as a purpose of human beings. Nevertheless, Christians are Christian as they are baptized into the body of Christ, and all that is said regarding church's divine purpose obviously has meaning for her members.

### **Cultivation of Communities of the Holy Spirit**

The chapter "Missional Community: Cultivating Communities of the Holy Spirit" by Inagrace T. Dietterich is a useful piece on spiritual formation for groups in mission. Dietterich is a Methodist minister and the Director of Theological Research at the Center for Parish Development in Chicago, Illinois. She argues that true Christian community is formed, led, and bears fruit only by the Holy Spirit. The community is a most important means by which the Spirit works to form God's people: "Our identity and our vision are both taught and caught from our interaction with others in diverse social groupings. The question is not whether we will be socialized, but what kind of society will have its way with us. ... We are being formed – cultivated – as a people."<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> George R. Hunsberger, 82.

<sup>125</sup> Inagrace T. Diettrich, "Cultivating Communities of the Holy Spirit," in *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, 150.



Dietterich urges that the church then faithfully shape the hearts of God's people through ecclesial practices that are historical, communal, experiential and dynamic. She presents a number of practices as only a sampling of many through which the Spirit may work. While practices vary according to culture and era, they are commonly founded upon the witness of Scripture. By way of example several are explored in depth: prayer, baptism, communion, reconciliation, discernment, and hospitality. For each of these she describes how a people is divinely shaped and spiritually filled for a way of life that bears witness of the kingdom to the world. The blessing of corporately observing Christian practices is real for the Christian community, but no less so for the world's sake as the community acts. These practices are critical and even determinative:

The quality, character and witness of Christian missional communities are determined by the social or ecclesial practices that shape, train, equip, guide – cultivate – their identity, vision, and action. As they share in the standards, purposes, and orientation of these practices, so will their standards, purposes, and orientation as a community be shaped.<sup>126</sup>

*Missional Church* is a useful book for leaders of short-term mission teams in that it addresses important, underlying sources of the malaise in the North American church, especially in the church's loss of a sense of missional vocation. The remedies presented do not call for program but for theological and spiritual transformation; they do not target an area of the life of the church, but see what the whole can become. This perspective can be most useful for a movement which often is prone to develop mission trips as a program for a certain cadre within the church. Furthermore, the practical recommendation, even insistence, on the observance of corporate Christian disciplines for

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 158-159.

becoming a people in mission is encouragement for the project at hand. Mission teams, and their congregations even, ought to be engaged in regular covenant practices such as Bible study and prayer, as well as those practices apparently more obvious for mission such as compassion and service, so that they may be formed for mission the only way possible – by the Holy Spirit.

### John Gordon Davies

J.G. Davies served as Professor of Theology in the University of Birmingham (England). His interests were reflected in studies and writing on worship, liturgy and architecture. Mission was also one of his passions, and he was active in World Council of Churches conversations on the nature of mission and the role of the church in mission. Later in this chapter some of his remarks in those conversations will be included in a discussion of the relationship between evangelism and social justice. However, he is included in a review of the literature primarily for his work *Worship and Mission*.<sup>127</sup> Nearly forty years after its publication it continues to be regarded as “seminal”<sup>128</sup> and is still one of the few in-depth studies of the relationship between worship and mission. Two concepts from Davies’ book are presented for consideration in formation for mission: worship as necessarily bound to mission, and mission as the vocation of the baptized.

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<sup>128</sup> Tieg, 44.

## **Worship and Mission Bound Together**

Davies contends that worship has been regarded overmuch as directed inward for the sake of building up the body of Christ. In *Worship and Mission* he directs the church's vision outward by exegeting worship and its elements as having meaning in relationship with the world to which the church is sent. At that time of writing very little was made of the relationship between worship and mission. "Those who make worship the object of their specialized study scarcely ever mention mission – not even in a footnote; while those who are concerned to develop the theology of mission seem in general to have little time for cultic acts. So worship and mission are treated as two totally distinct objects of theological investigation..."<sup>129</sup>

Davies goes on to describe that in many passages of scripture "cultic act" and mission are joined together. In John 6 Jesus speaks of being sent in order that those who believe may eat his flesh; in Romans 15 Paul ministers to the Gentiles in a priestly manner that they may make an acceptable offering to God. In regard to congregational services, Davies examines specific elements of worship and describes how they are missional in nature: prayer in many forms; confession of faith, and confession and absolution of sin with the sharing of peace; proclamation; collection; notices as a means to mission; dismissal – or sending – to the world. Davies call is to understand worship and mission as two inseparable dimensions in the life of God's people:

The self-glorification which is often connected with exclusive concentration upon the horizontal dimension of life needs to be neutralized by the constant affirmation of its vertical dimension in worship. Otherwise it is relatively easy to

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<sup>129</sup> Davies, 9.

accept a one-sided involvement in the world for the world's sake instead of for God's sake. An individual or group may be so completely taken up with their engagement in the world that he or they lose the central recognition that what they do they do within and because of the work of Christ. To worship and so to focus attention upon God in Christ and to see this as a dimension of the whole of life recalls to us the sovereignty, the freedom and the accomplishment of Christ which is at the heart of the assurance needed in mission.

If worship, in the narrower, cultic sense, thus enables mission to keep its divine source constantly before it, mission in its turn enables worship to be truly authentic, for it may be said that only that is authentic worship which combines both the vertical and the horizontal, i.e. both communion with the transcendent God and mission in the world.<sup>130</sup>

In all aspects of its life the church is urged to be looking outward beyond itself.

Davies was one of the early theologians to speak of God's mission and even nature as centrifugal – sending out, in love. This is seen throughout Scripture, but especially in the action of the Trinity in the sending of Christ and the sending of the Spirit. As Christ was sent to serve, so the church is, also. Mission as service to the world is a sign of the kingdom of God, and the church is to spend herself in this service: "...the New Israel will only live if it is prepared to be conformed to the death of Christ. It must spend itself in servanthood through availability to the world."<sup>131</sup>

There are those, like Stott, who have objected to the kind of service or spending Davies means. The church, even Christianity, is to be prepared for self-emptying in the face of the world's need. Self-preservation is antithetical to both true worship and true mission. The warning against mission as church-extension is fair and has biblical basis, but there are solid arguments such as those made by Stott against emptying to the extent that the mission is, in essence, determined by the world. Davies writes, "So the Gospel

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 17-18.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 51.

must be declared in terms of human need and deliverance and not in terms of guilt and salvation... For the Church's vocation is to servanthood and not to salvation... Election was and is for service..."<sup>132</sup> What, it may be asked, of the mission of Jesus in whose name repentance and forgiveness of sins are to be proclaimed to all nations? Nevertheless, Davies theology is a compelling corrective to those who would divorce worship and mission, or those who would be tempted to self-serving (even institution-serving) practices of mission.

### **Baptism and Mission**

Davies takes great care in exploring how the sacraments are missional. His consideration of baptism deserves hearing regarding the identity and formation of missionaries. He argues against baptism as a private and individualistic practice, and points to Jesus' baptism – a point of identification with those he came to serve – and Jesus' commission – to go to all the nations – as foundational. Some might object to the degree to which he sees corporate meaning in a Christian's baptism: "Christ is the one who 'died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves' (II Cor. 5.15). Consequently, when we undergo the baptismal death, we too die for all in union with Christ, not just for ourselves."<sup>133</sup> Here he picks up again the necessity of the church to be about suffering and dying in mission. But even if one finds these views extreme, there is something compelling about the claim that to join with Christ in baptism is also

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 76.

to join with Christ in mission. Surveying the whole of Scripture, it is hard to deny that baptism includes initiation into mission, it is becoming one of the sent people.

This understanding of the relationship between baptism and mission can be foundational for any Christian seeking to understand their vocation in terms of mission. “Baptism is then ordination to the corporate royal priesthood and this means that its members are thereby consecrated for mission.”<sup>134</sup> Not only are Christians consecrated for mission, Davies would content that they do not understand their baptism until they are engaged in mission.<sup>135</sup>

While Davies work has been controversial in evangelical circles (see Stott’s objections below), a debt is owed to him for the understanding of centrifugal mission as issuing from God’s loving character. Similar appreciation is due for describing the worship of God’s people as necessarily expressed in service to the world – this service intimately referred to in the elements of services on Sunday. Short-term mission team members would benefit from exploring both of these, as well as looking to their baptisms, to understand the ultimate “why” for serving in mission.

Thomas Schattauer

The book *Inside Out: Worship in an Age of Mission* is written by ten Lutheran worship professors and is included here for its further consideration of the themes presented in Davies’ work. Like *Worship and Mission*, baptism, communion, and elements of services of worship are examined for their missional nature. A practical

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 92.

metaphor for understanding the relationship between worship and mission – seen in the title – is presented here. Thomas Schattauer describes that there are three ways to relate worship to God’s mission in the world:

An “inside and out” approach is one in which worship is seen as something for the participants, nourishing them so that then they are strengthened sufficiently inside the church to then head outside to serve and share the gospel with neighbors - the people who are not inside with them. What is wrong with this? If worship is used as a kind of fortifying, room-service breakfast before heading “out there,” the church has drastically separated worship and mission. The people of God may see themselves as running forays out into the field, and then returning to the safety of sanctuary – back and forth, between two separate lives, two separate worlds. It must be asked, are these worlds so separate before God? Is the life of faith intended to be so divided?

A second approach is “outside in,” in which the church tries to bring the world, and its mission work, inside the church and use worship to reach the outsiders. Contemporary worship or seeker-sensitive services may be designed to have this kind of evangelistic appeal. This approach, too, has its flaws. In this case the question to be asked is - for whom is the worship? Is it a service for God, or a service for the seekers? Worship is reduced to a tool for mission.

Schattauer calls the third way of relating worship to mission as “inside out.” This is when the church worships God while focused on “God’s mission toward the world.”<sup>136</sup> In this approach the church does not set aside outside mission work for some

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<sup>136</sup> Schattauer, 3.

private time with God. Neither does it turn its attention away from God to address the felt needs of the unchurched people who are present. Rather, in worship the church bears witness to what God is doing in the world, and so worship becomes mission. The church worships God well, and the world hears good news well. The world does not have to eavesdrop, and Christians do not have to take pains to whisper condescendingly to the world. Christians understand themselves as standing out in the open – in the world – and worshipping the God who is busy reconciling the world to himself. The world sees/experiences/is welcome to participate in the reality of God’s kingdom coming. This metaphor provides an appealing picture of what it is to hold worship and mission together – revitalizing for both as they overlap and provide meaning to one another.

#### John R. W. Stott

John R. W. Stott is an internationally known theologian and pastor, and is Rector Emeritus of All Souls Church in London. He first drafted the lectures in *Christian Mission in the Modern World* in 1974 for the International Congress on World Evangelization at Lausanne. This gathering produced the Lausanne Covenant, an evangelical vision of mission that was, depending on one’s viewpoint, either firm in its orthodoxy and fresh in its holistic concern for evangelism and social responsibility, or out of date by speaking of the two separately and by insisting that evangelism is primary of two mandates in mission. Stott’s presentation of his theology is in part a critique of contemporary ecumenical understandings of mission that he believes are wanting. Throughout the book he responds to the writings of individual theologians, such as J.G.



Davies and Gustavo Gutierrez, and to the declarations of ecumenical bodies such as Uppsala - the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches held in 1968. Among these voices he hears traditional terms used with new meanings. While Stott identifies himself as an evangelical and defends that which he believes is scripturally faithful in a traditional theology of mission, he also acknowledges with appreciation that which he finds true and valuable in the theology of mission presented by ecumenical voices. His call is for all to study Scripture and emerge with a clearer and truer understanding of mission. "My chief concern, therefore, is to bring both ecumenical and evangelical thinking to the same independent and objective test, namely that of the biblical revelation."<sup>137</sup> Therefore he begins his book with two sections in the first chapter on mission, "Two Extreme Views" and "A Biblical Synthesis?"

Stott's theology of mission is articulated as he biblically defines, as requested by the Lausanne planning committee, five words which have been understood and used in different ways by different schools in the past several generations. He takes up mission, evangelism, dialogue, salvation and conversion. A summary of his definitions can be found in his final chapter:

'Mission' is the loving service which God sends his people into the world to render. It includes both evangelism and social action, for each is in itself an authentic expression of love and neither needs to other to justify it. Yet because of the appalling lostness of man there is an insistent urgency about our evangelistic task. The nature of 'evangelism' is a faithful proclamation of the good news. 'Dialogue' is its necessary preliminary inasmuch as listening must precede proclaiming, and the 'salvation' which is its goal is personal freedom through Christ, though with unavoidable social implications in anticipation of the eschatological 'freedom of glory' when God makes all things new. Our fifth

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<sup>137</sup> Stott, 12.

word is ‘conversion.’ It denotes the response which the good news demands and without which salvation cannot be received.<sup>138</sup>

Later in this chapter the conversation between Stott and other theologians represented here on the unity of evangelism and social engagement in mission will be reviewed. His thoughts on this unity, as well as on the substance of the gospel and the nature of salvation, are summarized below. They are a useful contribution in considering the essential place of matters of the soul in mission.

### **Evangelism and Social Justice as Partners in Mission**

Stott’s examination of the versions of the Great Commission in all four of the gospels leads him and the reader to a full understanding of the *missio Dei*. Stott describes that at one point his consideration of Jesus’ commission focused on the versions in the synoptic gospels, and his interpretation of the commission was that it is to preaching, witnessing, and making disciples. However, over time in studying the version in John, he has come to believe that the commission includes also social justice. Because Jesus said, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (20:21), Jesus’ mission becomes the model for that of the disciples, and the whole of Jesus’ mission must be studied. A general starting point is that Jesus came to serve, and while the climax of that service was the offering of his life as an atonement for sin, throughout his life his service was broad and included words and deeds. The church, made up of Jesus’ disciples, is also sent to be a servant people, identifying with others, being vulnerable, ministering with humility. Stott describes evangelism and social justice as partners in the mission of God, neither one

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 109.

diminished by being a precursor or fruit of the other. Christian service ministers each and both without demanding reason other than a Christ-like love.

### **Jesus as the Gospel**

Though Stott takes pains to include and describe social justice as part of the mission given to the church, he also is insistent that sharing news of Jesus as Lord and Savior is at the heart of mission. Stott maintains that evangelism is primary even as the church ministers compassion to humans who suffer or are oppressed. Alarmed that evangelism - understood as sharing news of Christ as Savior - is being neglected for social engagement, he quotes himself from a plenary session at Uppsala:

“...I do not find a comparable concern or compassion for the spiritual hunger of men...The church’s first priority...remains the millions and millions...who (as Christ and his apostles tell us again and again) being without Christ are perishing...”<sup>139</sup> “... is anything so destructive of human dignity as alienation from God through ignorance or rejection of the gospel?”<sup>140</sup>

And so the good news of Jesus as Savior must be announced, even clearly articulated. The supreme resource for the gospel message is Scripture, and Scripture portrays the apostles who, in a word, believed God’s good new to be *Jesus*. “All concur that in a single word, God’s good news is Jesus. ...Jesus Christ is the heart and soul of the gospel. When Philip sat down beside the Ethiopian, we are told literally that ‘he evangelized to him Jesus’ that is, he shared with him the good news of Jesus (Acts 8:35).”<sup>141</sup> In order to appreciate how the apostles present Jesus, Stott commends study in

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 35.

Scripture of the gospel events (about Jesus), the gospel witnesses (to Jesus), the gospel affirmations (e.g. Jesus is Lord), the gospel promises (e.g. forgiveness, the Spirit), and the gospel demands (repentance and faith). All of these are part of the gospel of Jesus. One cannot be in mission without evangelism, and one cannot evangelize without proclaiming Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

### **Humanity's Need for Salvation**

In a similar vein, Stott addresses the nature of salvation and defends a soteriology that has moral dimensions and personal, transcendent promise. He makes a biblical critique of diverse definitions of “salvation.” Regarding physical health, he acknowledges that disease is bad, that God heals, and that God’s Word promises physical wholeness in the new creation. However, he rejects that this is what is meant by the salvation described in Scripture as offered in Christ:

Salvation by faith in Christ crucified and risen is moral, not material, a rescue from sin not from harm, and the reason why Jesus said ‘your faith has saved you’ to both categories is that his works of physical rescue (from disease, drowning and death) were intentional signs of his salvation, and were thus understood by the early church.<sup>142</sup>

Stott also considers another definition of “wholeness,” that represented in liberation theology. As with physical health, he takes pains to affirm that liberation and justice should be Christian pursuits and are pleasing to God. But he rejects that social liberation is the salvation described in Scripture. Further he disagrees with an understanding of the “work and presence of God” as so universal that the Holy Spirit is

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, 87.

said to dwell in every person, and every person is part of the new humanity. Within this broad perspective conversion has to do with reconciliation between people. He protests: “Now certainly a true love and knowledge of God must issue in love and justice to our neighbour, but to put this the other way round and make the knowledge of God the consequence of doing justice, and even to equate the two, is uncommonly like a doctrine of salvation by good works.”<sup>143</sup>

Stott insists that while God is concerned for human bodies and society, and promises the redemption of creation, salvation in Christ is personal and not institutional, moral and not material. Regarding relief from poverty, physical ailments and oppression, Stott states that “...deliverance from these things is not the salvation which Christ died and rose to secure for men.”<sup>144</sup> The salvation he sees in Scripture is a freedom greater and deeper than deliverance from material poverty or imprisonment. Salvation is not only *from*, it is also *to*. It is freedom from sin, and spiritual oppression, and the self, *to* “the glorious liberty of the children of God.” “...when God saves his people, he not only rescues them from the oppressor but he saves them for himself.”<sup>145</sup>

Several points can be drawn from Stott’s work for the orientation of short-term missionaries. His emphasis on Jesus as the gospel, and his stress of the essential place of the proclamation in mission, should encourage study of this gospel. The outline of gospel events, witnesses, affirmations, promises and demands would be an excellent approach

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 102.

for short-term mission teams to reflect upon on the heart of the gospel. Also, while Stott expresses Christian value for compassion, good deeds, and temporal justice, his insistence that there is a salvation that transcends these should encourage missionaries that there is yet more good news to be told and good fruit to be realized in mission beyond trip service projects and human relationships established. Freedom from sin and death, and liberation to relationship with God as his own children, is very good news.

#### David J. Bosch

David J. Bosch was an experienced and well respected missionary, scholar, and church leader. Among many other roles, he served as professor of missiology at the University of South Africa from 1971 until his death in 1992. In 1991, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* was published. This exhaustive study has been described by Lesslie Newbigin as “a kind of *Summa Missiologica*.” In it, Bosch examines the predominant paradigms of mission through history, describes models of mission drawn from interpretation of the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke-Acts, as well as Pauline writings, and identifies elements of “an emerging ecumenical missionary paradigm.” Three aspects of Bosch’s study are highlighted for considering of short-term mission orientation: change in the understanding and practice of mission, holism in aspects of the contemporary mission paradigm, and the vital role of a biblical Christology in defining mission.

#### **Change in Mission Paradigms, and the Gospel as Anchor**

Bosch borrows Hans Küng's six divisions of church history that reflect distinct views of the Christian faith, and for each of these identifies marked perspectives on mission. His thesis emphasizes that from one paradigm to the next there is both continuity with and change from that which was held before. The demarcations between paradigmatic eras are not sharp; though a particular paradigm may hold sway in the church's perspective of mission at a given time, yet the transition is progressive and elements of past paradigms live on in certain circles or even in certain aspects of otherwise modern theologies. While paradigms change, God's revelation, especially in Jesus Christ, has unchanging authority in determining the shape of the mission given to the church. Change ideally comes about as the church is corrected, challenged, called anew by the Word:

For the Christian this means that any paradigm shift can only be carried out on the basis of the gospel and because of the gospel, never, however, against the gospel. Contrary to the natural sciences, theology relates not only to the present and the future, but also to the past, to tradition, to God's primary witness to human. Theology must undoubtedly always be relevant and contextual, but this may never be pursued at the expense of God's revelation in and through the history of Israel and, supremely, the event of Jesus Christ. Christians take seriously the epistemological priority of their classical text, the Scriptures.

I realize that, in stating the above, I have hardly solved any problems. Scriptures comes to us in the shape of human words, which are already "contextual" (in the sense of being written for very specific historical contexts) and are, moreover, open to different interpretations. In making the affirmation above I am, however, suggesting a "point of orientation" all Christians (should) share and on the basis of which dialogue between them becomes possible.<sup>146</sup>

Bosch's observation that the church's understanding and practice of mission changes over time is useful to the discussion at hand. Short-term missions are influenced by the theological currents in missions in general, and, as they are practiced today, are a

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<sup>146</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 187.

new form of mission. In this, one does well to listen to Bosch's call to measure any new paradigm for mission against the primary witness of Scripture to God in Jesus Christ. In the project presented, study of Scripture, especially texts from the gospels, are presented as a critical means by which short-term missionaries can ground their understanding of mission and their identity as Christ's disciples in mission.

### **Holism in the Emerging Paradigm of Mission**

In addition to Bosch's thinking on change and authenticity in mission, it is also useful to comment on just a few of the "elements of an emerging ecumenical mission paradigm" in which Bosch's concern for holism in mission is particularly seen.

#### **Mission as the "Church-with-Others"**

Bosch describes that the language of the church "for" the world runs the risk of elevating the church to a position where it is unnecessarily separate from the world it serves, and in danger of condescension toward the world it serve. In this case, the church does well to understand itself as "with" others. It also must know that it is effective as sign of the kingdom only by virtue of its relationship with Christ, and only insofar as it points clearly to him and not to itself.

In this humility of the church's relationship with God and with the world, Bosch encourages "creative tension" rather mutual exclusion in ways that the church approaches the world. The two views of the church in question are the bearer of news of eternal life,



and the evidence of God at work in the world - matters of the soul and matters of the body, so to speak.

One may, therefore, perceive the church as an ellipse with two foci. In and around the first it acknowledges and enjoys the source of its life; this is where worship and prayer are emphasized. From and through the second focus the church engages and challenges the world. This is a forth-going and self-spending focus, where service, mission and evangelism are stressed... Neither focus should ever be at the expense of the other; rather, they stand in each other's service.<sup>147</sup>

He concludes, "We now recognize that the church is both a theological and a sociological entity, an inseparable union of the divine and the dusty."<sup>148</sup>

#### Mission as *Missio Dei*

In tracing the theology of mission back to the character of God, Bosch cautions that only activities of the church in concert with *missio Dei* are authentically mission. There is no mission other than God's, God is the sole author of mission: "Mission has its origin in the heart of God. God is a fountain of sending love. This is the deepest source of mission. It is impossible to penetrate deeper still; there is mission because God loves people."<sup>149</sup> Language such as this describes God's action as inseparable from God's love in mission, and that the mission of the church is inseparable from the mission of God.

#### Mission as Mediating Salvation

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 385.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 389.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 392.

The church's shifting definitions of salvation as described and critiqued by Bosch illustrate degrees of differentiation between body and soul. He rejects definitions of salvation that identify it strictly with either the present or the future, either the material or the spiritual, as has been done at different times and by different voices. He stresses that God's salvation in Christ is for more than the reconciliation of the individual to God; the Christian's vocation is represented also in the prayer that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. At the same time he writes that:

...salvation and well-being, even if they are closely interlocked, do not coincide completely. The Christian faith is a critical factor, the reign of God a critical category, and the Christian gospel not identical with the agenda of modern emancipation and liberation movements...<sup>150</sup>

He criticizes the "horizontalist" model of salvation as placing untenable faith in humanity. Division of body and soul displaces Christ at the center of what necessarily must be a holistic mission:

Christians are...forced to ask whether the tendency to allow theology and mission to be submerged in social ethics must not unavoidably lead to a relativizing of the person of Jesus Christ. ...The inescapable result of much of the modern paradigm is that the world's needs and solutions are being portrayed in terms which, to an extent, are independent of Jesus Christ. The church, however, is called in its mission to give witness to what God has "once for all, absolutely new, unrepeatable and finally done in Jesus Christ for the sake of the salvation of the world." It is Jesus Christ who "accomplishes all salvation. No one can complete his work if he does not achieve it himself."<sup>151</sup>

Bosch cautions against dualism in defining salvation:

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 396.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 398.

We stand in need of an interpretation of salvation which operates within a *comprehensive* Christological framework, which makes the *totus Christus* – his incarnation, earthly life, death, resurrection, and parasouia – indispensable for church and theology....

It therefore makes sense that in missionary circles today, but elsewhere as well, the mediating of “comprehensive”, “integral”, “total”, or “universal” salvation is increasingly identified as the purpose of mission, in this way overcoming the inherent dualism in the traditional and more recent models...  
...we should minister to people in their *total* need, that we should involve individual as well as society, soul *and* body, present *and* future in our ministry of salvation.<sup>152</sup>

Even as he urges interest in creation as well as new creation, Bosch does not neglect a moral or personal or spiritual or eternal understanding of salvation, “We therefore hold on to the transcendent character of salvation also, and to the need of calling people to faith in God through Christ. Salvation does not come but along the route of repentance and personal faith commitment.”<sup>153</sup>

#### Mission as Social Justice, Mission as Evangelism

As heard already, and along with most of the other theologians reviewed here, Bosch argues for the inclusion of evangelism and social justice in the overarching mission of God. In his discussion of social justice, he writes about the tension between (political) justice and (religious) love. The “God-world” and “spirit-body” dualism that has been present throughout history was strengthened during the Enlightenment. Bosch criticizes Jonathan Edward’s response of two binding mandates – spiritual, and social – as unsatisfactory, because one, evangelism, became favored to the neglect of the other, social concern, especially in fundamentalist circles. The decade after the writing of the

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 399.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 400.

Lausanne Covenant would be years in which this preference and dichotomy would be illustrated, and then increasingly protested, in evangelical conversations on mission. However, Bosch points to signs of hope by the mid 1980s in the form of a broadening evangelical commitment that took seriously social ills and evils such as apartheid in South Africa.

Bosch commends the growing evangelical concern for social justice, and describes that on the other side of the divide, ecumenicals have found that mission without clear witness to Christ is wanting. In his chapter on evangelism, he argues that while mission is wider than evangelism, the sharing of good news and the call to life in Christ represented in evangelism is essential to mission. It involves inviting people to reorient their lives to Christ at the center as Savior and Lord. The gifts and demands of the gospel, while not individualistic, are personal. It is only people, and not institutions, that can come to faith.

Relentlessly binding heart and hand together in his theology, Bosch completes the circle in his discussion of evangelism by describing the call to discipleship as a call to serve Christ and join him in the work of the kingdom: “Evangelism, then, is calling people to mission.”<sup>154</sup> Surveying the missiological landscape of the 1990s, Bosch sees the two sides of a divided camp moving toward each other as they seek to practice mission faithfully in the way of Christ:

Today both evangelicals and ecumenicals grasp in a more profound manner than ever before something of the depth of evil in the world, the inability of human beings to usher in God’s reign, and the need for both personal renewal by God’s

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 418.

Spirit *and* resolute commitment to challenging and transforming the structures of society.<sup>155</sup>

### **Mission Described Christologically**

After 120 pages examining 13 elements of an emerging mission paradigm, Bosch asks, “Is everything mission?” As he finishes the book he suggests an answer. While encouraging error on the side of broadness rather than narrowness, he affirms that there is a definite shape to true mission. To describe this shape, he uses “six Christological salvific events” to represent the “faces of the church in mission.”<sup>156</sup> The *incarnation* places before the church the practice of the human Jesus of Nazareth. It is under the *cross* that the church is set and learns of a reconciling love that serves by suffering and death. The *resurrection* is the first fruit of a victory whose fullness is assured; the hope of the church’s message spoken and embodied is that “Christ is risen.” In the *ascension* Christ is enthroned and his reign begins, relevant not just to the church but also to the world, and so the church labors in the world with hope. By the Spirit of *Pentecost* Christ’s mission is continued through the church to the world. And the *parousia* gives the church expectant hope for the full coming of Christ’s kingdom and a vocation of being the community which bears good news for all the nations.

The themes highlighted here from Bosch are helpful in considering short-term missions in regard to historical context, holism, and pattern. His review of paradigms places the current missions movement in historical context. Short-term missionaries’

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 408.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 512-518.

understandings of mission are shaped by many complex historical and cultural factors at work not just in the world but also in the church. The identification of historical influences is useful; as much so is the demonstration that views of mission are diverse and changing. Since Jesus' commission, the church's understanding of mission has not been static. Knowing this encourages the church to examine perspectives of mission critically and biblically. Short-term missionaries ought to be engaged in such reflection as they engage in mission.

Bosch's discussion and commendation of holism in mission is exhaustive. While mission may not be everything, it very likely is more than any individual or particular church may imagine, and is an agenda wholly of God's making and not humanity's. The church therefore is absolutely dependent upon God for everything about its mission. The short-term missionary, and any Christian, is compelled to look to the whole of Scripture and especially the example and teaching of Christ to grasp every aspect of mission to which his or her discipleship leads.

Finally, Bosch's approach of using Christological events to suggest the authentic shape of the church's mission is well suited for, and affirms, an orientation to mission that is at heart an orientation to Christ. These could be a useful study for the short-term mission team. While Bosch presents this as a reference of pattern rather than piety, his perspective is not just academic, and one cannot read the whole of the book and come away thinking of his understanding of *missio Dei* as anything but a consuming call of God in Christ to the church and every Christian.

### Differences Among These Writers

Even in the brief reviews above the tensions between these theologians regarding the relationship between faith and action can be heard. The nature of salvation, of God's mission, of the church's mission, are issues that were and are debated. In some cases the debate has been made explicit in their texts, especially the roles of evangelism and social action in mission. That debate will be fleshed out briefly, beginning with Stott's response to Davies' theology, then looking at Bosch's and Dyrness' critiques of Stott, and finally reflecting on the degree to which these writers finally are at odds.

A self-proclaimed evangelical voice, Stott included Davies in his criticisms of the ecumenical church's understanding of mission. Stott was present at some of the same gatherings of the World Council of Churches in which Davies' theology and words were considered. Much in his book *Christian Mission* was response to the theology prevailing at that time in the WCC conversations. Stott assesses Davies' missiology as a reconstruction of mission with the renewal of society equated with the realization of the kingdom of God. From this perspective God is at work ahead of and perhaps even apart from the church; the church must look to the world for her agenda. He summarizes Davies' perspective, "he equated humanization, reconciliation, shalom and the setting up of God's kingdom as being together the goal of mission." He quotes from another of Davies' works, *Dialogue with the World*, "'...we are required to enter into partnership with God in history to renew society' (p. 15)." <sup>157</sup>

Stott rejects Davies' equation, noting that not all social movements are divine renewal, Jesus' contemporaries were mistaken when they expected primarily and only

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<sup>157</sup> Stott, 18.

material fulfillment of messianic prophecies, mission is not the whole of God's activity in the world, and evangelistic concern is absent from "the standard ecumenical viewpoint." Instead, he urges that "The church's first priority...remains the millions and millions...who (as Christ and his apostles tell us again and again) being without Christ are perishing...the Lord Jesus Christ sent his church to preach the good news and make disciples..." (19-20) He holds up evangelism as an essential component of true mission, a "cumulative emphasis" in the instruction of Jesus and the accounts of the gospel writers.

In Davies' *Worship and Mission* examples of points at which Stott would find the two at odds are evident:

(Pietism) reduces the *kerygma*, which is the proclamation of certain objective facts, of what God has done and is doing, to a recital of personal experiences calculated to reproduce the same experiences in the hearers. The Church's witness becomes individual testimony to what God has done for *me* in terms of *my* salvation, whereas the true witness is to what God has done and is doing in the world...<sup>158</sup> Davies, 43

The same tension is present in Davies' understanding of the church's mission and service: "The Gospel must be declared in terms of human need and deliverance and not in terms of guilt and salvation... For the Church's vocation is to servanthood and not to salvation... Election was and is for service..."<sup>159</sup> This is a very different understanding of mission from that of Stott, for whom evangelism is primary and consists of proclaiming a gospel of Jesus as Savior from sin and all of its effects.

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<sup>158</sup> Davies, 43.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 45.



Stott does not deny that the church is to take an interest in the world. He acknowledges the validity and necessity of both evangelism and social ministry in mission. But he argues against two common perspectives of the relationship between the two: social action is neither a means to evangelism nor a manifestation of evangelism. It is rather a partner of evangelism. Compassion ministered out of the simple motivation of love has its own place in mission. This both/and model for mission is one of service in the way of Jesus, supported by the John's version of the commission: As the Father has sent me, so send I you. Mission is not everything the church does, but is "everything the church is sent into the world to do."<sup>160</sup> He delineates the church's mission further:

"Mission", then, is not a word for everything the church does. "The church in mission" sounds fine, but it's an overstatement. For the church is a worshipping as well as a serving community, and although worship and service belong together they are not to be confused. Nor, as we have seen, does "mission" cover everything God does in the world. For God the Creator is constantly active in his world in providence, in common grace and in judgment, quite apart from the purposes for which he has sent his Son, his Spirit and his church into the world.<sup>161</sup>

This is a narrower understanding of mission than all of those held by the authors represented, perhaps with the exception of Andreas and Köstenberger.

In reply to distinctions that Stott persistently makes regarding the church's mission, Bosch criticizes him as falling short by leaving evangelism and social justice as distinct actions beneath the umbrella of "mission." Bosch insists that evangelism is not synonymous with mission, but is at the center of all the church is sent to do and does not

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<sup>160</sup> Stott, 30.

<sup>161</sup> Stott, 30.

exist on its own. He criticizes the Lausanne Covenant and Stott in particular for a

dualistic approach:

In spite of the advantages of this approach over the one-mandate strategy (“evangelism only”) that dominated evangelicalism for so long, Stott’s understanding of mission as “evangelism *plus* social responsibility” was under pressure from the very beginning. The moment one regards mission as consisting of two separate components one has, in principle, conceded that each has a life of its own. One is then by implication saying that it is possible to have evangelism without a social dimension and Christian social involvement without an evangelistic dimension. What is more, if one suggests that one component is primary and the other secondary, one implies that the one is essential, the other optional.<sup>162</sup>

Bosch is not the only critic of Stott’s definitions. William Dyrness, a fellow evangelical, responds to Stott with caution about dividing the purposes of God in mission:

The message that the Church speaks of, however, encompasses the whole of God’s purposes for creation in it’s purview. All these purposes have now come to focus on Christ whom God has determined will have preeminence in all things. At this point we must be very careful not to divide up what God has brought together. John Stott, for example insists that “God the creator is constantly active in the world in providence, in common grace and judgment, quite apart from the purposes for which he sent his Son, his Spirit and his Church into the world..” (25) But our study has shown us that these more comprehensive actions of God are now focused on the redemptive purposes revealed in Christ and announced in the Church. ...It is our theological categories and not the teaching of Scripture that have made God’s general providence possess purposes “quite apart” from his special grace.<sup>163</sup>

Whatever Bosch’s and Dyrness’ critiques may be, they too are challenged to talk about aspects or facets of mission that are inseparable and yet somehow distinguishable.

Bosch acknowledges evangelism as a distinct task within mission: “Mission is the

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<sup>162</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 405, see also p 412.

<sup>163</sup> Dyrness, *Let the Earth Rejoice!*, 195.

church sent into the world to love, to serve, to preach, to teach, to heal, to liberate. 2.

*Evangelism should therefore not be equated with mission.* ...It is therefore better to uphold the distinctiveness of evangelism within the wider mission of the church. It is, however, impossible to dissociate it from the church's wider mission."<sup>164</sup> In *Changing the Mind of Mission*, Dyrness with Engel describes the relationship between evangelism and social transformation as "partnership" in kingdom work. They quote Stott agreeably in calling for "integrated" mission in which the Gospel is "illuminated" by social involvement.<sup>165</sup>

Even with such evident passion regarding holism in mission and the preservation of critical elements of mission, there may be more common concern among all of these theologians than their arguments with one another suggest. They may be seen as working toward this concern for holism from different ends. In seeking to present a balanced view of mission, Stott quotes Dr. W. A. Visser t'Hooft with appreciation for his firm marriage between horizontal and vertical aspects of the life of faith:

"A Christianity which has lost its vertical dimension has lost its salt and is not only insipid in itself, but useless for the world. But a Christianity which would use the vertical preoccupation as a means to escape from its responsibility for and in the common life of man is a denial of the incarnation, of God's love for the world manifested in Christ' (*The Uppsala 68 Report* edited by Normal Goodall, WCC, Geneva 1968 pp.317-18)."<sup>166</sup>

The similarity between this language and the image used by Davies of the vertical dimension of worship necessarily being wedded to the horizontal practice of mission is

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<sup>164</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 412.

<sup>165</sup> Engel and Dyrness, 94.

<sup>166</sup> Stott, 21.

striking: “An individual or group may be so completely taken up with their engagement in the world that he or they lose the central recognition that what they do they do within and because of the work of Christ.”<sup>167</sup>

Furthermore, though Stott is deliberate in defining evangelism and social action separately, his intent in writing is not just definition but also synthesis. For some in the world of missiology, Stott’s movement from viewing social justice as related to but separate from mission to residing within the scope of God’s mission is seen as speaking more to the integral nature of social justice to mission than to its distinctiveness.<sup>168</sup> “John Stott has reminded us that the Great Commission – preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations – should never be divorced from the Great Commandment – practice love toward all our neighbors.”<sup>169</sup>

## Summary

While there is diversity among the theologians reviewed in defining salvation and mission, the common concerns that they share are instructive for those who seek a holistic theology and practice of mission. It may be possible to read this thesis as arguing for what Bosch has criticized as Enlightenment “cause-effect” thinking –evangelism (primary) necessarily leads to social justice. It is not; the mission of God is holistic. But in God’s calling of disciples to participate in mission, as seen in the story of Jesus’

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<sup>167</sup> Davies, 18.

<sup>168</sup> J. Herbert Kane, *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1978), 175.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid, 182.

calling the first disciples, there is a kind of sequence, and the personal relationship is prior to - though inseparable from - the mission. A similar parallel is seen in the argument that there is something essential in the vertical that makes the horizontal possible and meaningful. Stott's is right in saying that to reverse this brings one close to a doctrine of salvation by works.

All this is to say that short-term missionaries, like all disciples, are called first to relationship with Christ, by which they are joined as well to Christ's mission. It is by the gift of the Spirit that Jesus' disciples were, and are, made also witnesses. There is a personal recognition, conversion, that then propels Jesus' disciples into mission. Bosch's attention to the "therefore" in the great commission in Matthew ties the sending of the disciples to the revelation of Jesus' authority as a tight and certain progression:

If Jesus is indeed Lord of all this reality just *has* to be proclaimed. Nobody who knows of this can remain silent about it. ...Mission is a logical consequence of Jesus' induction as sovereign Lord of the universe. In the light of this, the "Great Commission" enunciates an empowerment rather than a command (Hahn 1980:38).<sup>170</sup>

When read this way, "make disciples" may be a delight eagerly received rather than a duty approached with reluctance. One may think of children clambering to rush good news to friends, and told by a parent, "Yes, you may go tell them now." Mission that has this kind of energy if mission carried out in devotion. Short-term missionaries must comprehend their own experiences as the recipients of God's mission in Christ. Mission is a call to action, but it is a call to action in relationship, a call to abiding. The life of faith is incomplete without both heart and hand; one will wither without the other.

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<sup>170</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 78.

### **Short-Term Guides**

Much energy has been devoted in missiology and theology and even ecclesiology to a holistic approach to mission, and there has been some attention given to holistic preparation for mission. However, little of serious theological substance has been written for the lay individual preparing for and participating in short-term mission. Earlier some of the possible reasons for this were explored. The understanding that the term length of a particular mission is irrelevant in defining mission may discourage the development of a distinct body of literature. The ill-founded approach and practice of much short-term “mission” may have discredited it as serious mission in the eyes of missiologists. Some may regard the movement as a fad tied more to cultural movements than to the vocation of the church and the movement of the Spirit. Regardless of the reason for slim offerings, the need must be addressed and materials developed that will equip those who are stepping forward to participate in the mission of the church to the world. Several of the more popular guides are reviewed briefly here. There is a special section devoted to materials prepared by and for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), that being the denominational context in which the thesis project was created. Particular attention is given to their suitability for orienting missionaries to Jesus, especially by the Scriptures, and for shaping their understanding of personal vocation in regard to discipleship and mission. Some texts have more in this respect than others. Texts that are thin on discipleship materials or Biblical content might yet make excellent practical companions to other resources geared toward spiritual formation for mission.

Paul Borthwick is director of the Youth Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship. He served on staff of Grace Chapel in Lexington Massachusetts for 22 years, and is an internationally known leader and author in short-term missions as well as youth work. Of the numerous books he has written on mission, two are included here. *How To Be a World Class Christian* is 13 lessons and a full leader's guide along with reproducible handouts.<sup>171</sup> It is written in a conversational style and includes lots of stories encourages any Christian to be outwardly focused, interested and engaged with the world around him or her – near and far. This is a book for everyone – topics range from reading the newspaper to conservation to neighborhood evangelism to international travel. Practical guidance is given on ways to learn about the world, pray for the world, practice a simple and sacrificial lifestyle, and to reach out locally and globally. It is not devotional material; it is full of pep and practicality. *Missions: God's Heart for the World* is a Bible study. Nine sessions on specific passages of scripture cover basic themes in world missions (blessed to be a blessing, sovereignty of God). The questions encourage detailed study of the passage as well as personal application. The leader's notes include further information on the Biblical texts and teaching recommendations. It is a good study of selected Scriptures for personal or group use.

Tim Dearborn of World Vision International has written two of the best books for spiritually preparing short-term mission teams. Prior to his ministry at World Vision, he was dean of the chapel and associate professor of theology at Seattle Pacific University. He served overseas for seven years and has led or participated in numerous short-term

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<sup>171</sup> Paul Borthwick, *How to Be A World Class Christian* (Waynesboro, Georgia: OM Literature, 1999).

mission trips. The books he has written out of this knowledge and experience cover critical considerations such as theology, culture, spirituality, and teamwork with relevant Biblical study and effective exercises and questions. He claims that this book is designed to prepare people rather than trips. Though the back cover of his book *Short-term Missions Workbook* presents short-term mission as life and faith transforming, his introduction indicates immediately that even more the kingdom of God is in view: “The deeper question is how can our engagement in short-term mission bear the fruit for God’s kingdom that the investment of resources, made by the body of Christ, in our travel deserves? ...Our funds and live must be invested wisely for the kingdom and not merely for spiritual adventurism.”<sup>172</sup> The eight studies for groups begin with a study of the God of mission and end with instruction about the reentry experience and how to continue in that which God has begun in the short-term mission trip. Perhaps even more so than the *Short-term missions Workbook*, *Beyond Duty: A Passion for Christ, a Heart for Mission*<sup>173</sup> is material for spiritual formation and not a program manual. Dearborn discourages a task-focus and urges instead a focus on loving Jesus, and loving people. Dearborn goes into depth on themes such as the mission of God and the kingdom of God, authority and holism in mission, suffering and passion. This book is not a Bible study and it does not have a leader’s guide. It is a brief, readable, but deeply theological book that would provide excellent discussion for short-term mission teams.

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<sup>172</sup> Tim Dearborn, *Short-Term Missions Workbook* (Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2003), 10.

<sup>173</sup> Tim Dearborn, *Beyond Duty: A Passion for Christ, A Heart for Mission* (Monrovia, California: MARC, 1997).



If there is an essential text for short-term mission planning, David C.

Forward's goal is to provide it in *The Essential Guide to the Short-term Mission Trip*.<sup>174</sup>

Forward, who is president of the Children's Aid Foundation, writes out of experience leading mission teams to Romania, the Dominican Republic and Lebanon. This book is one of the most comprehensive available for steps and tasks in preparing, leading, and following up short-term mission trips. Many contingencies are covered. 30 pages of sample materials and forms are included. As thorough as it is on practical matters, it is light on theology and discipleship. Outlines for ten group meetings include scripture readings, though the bulk of the agenda is on logistics and other types of preparation. The section on preparing spiritually is two pages long and includes recommendations to pray, read scripture and be commissioned in worship. This book is a useful companion to additional materials for spiritual orientation and Biblical instruction for mission.

*Before You Pack Your Bag Prepare Your Heart* is written by Cindy Judge, a consultant for short term-mission team leaders.<sup>175</sup> She is on staff at Wheaton Bible Church and has prepared curriculum for and worked with teams at Willow Creek Community Church. In Judge's concern that mission team members leave well prepared, she has written a Bible study guide with 12 lessons that can be used by an individual or group. There are spaces to reflect on themes such as humility, openness, trust, and teamwork, and further questions for journaling. For each lesson there is a page of

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<sup>174</sup> David C. Forward, *The Essential Guide to the Short-term mission Trip* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1998).

<sup>175</sup> Cindy Judge, *Before You Pack Your Bag Prepare Your Heart* (Wheaton, Illinois: Campfire Resources, Inc. 2000, revised 2005).

observations on the topic as applied to short-term mission. Another 10 pages have a couple of questions each for journaling during the trip. This book is brief but assists in the command of the title – missionaries are encouraged to reflect on their spiritual posture toward God and others as they prepare to serve in short-term mission.

*Vacations With a Purpose* comes in two editions: a team member's manual and a leader's manual.<sup>176</sup> The two authors have led numerous short-term missions, and one (Kim Hurst) developed significant short-term mission programs at University Presbyterian Church in Seattle. The title of the book immediately undermines an approach to mission that is Christ centered. The primary approach to the reader does as well - encouraging people to engage in short-term mission for its life- and congregation-changing impact (in addition to benefits to host). That being said, there is much practical information in this "planning handbook for your short-term mission." Plenty of questions for consideration are posed in regard to everything from accommodation and destination selection to hopes and fears. The participant guide includes six brief preparation sessions on areas ranging from packing to spirituality. The entire content on spiritual preparation consists of five questions encouraging regular prayer and Bible reading. There are also six sessions on language learning, and fourteen pages formatted for journaling while on a two week trip. These daily journal pages have a Scripture passage each for reflection. Materials for debriefing and for continued reflection and application after the trip cover an area often neglected. The leader's manual has a wealth of useful material in areas such as team selection, fund raising, and problems that often arise among teams and on

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<sup>176</sup> Chris Eaton and Kim Hurst, *Vacations with a Purpose* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 1991).

trips. Resources such as checklists, calendars, and sample forms are handy. The text of the team member's manual is included, along with instructions on how to prepare for and use those materials and sessions. These texts are not substantive for discipleship but the leader's manual in particular is a thorough practical resource for preparing, leading, and following up mission trips in other aspects.

*Launching the Great Go-Mission* by Lincoln Murdoch is subtitled "Short-Term Team Missions: A DISCIPLESHIP Springboard From the Local Church To The World."<sup>177</sup> Murdoch approaches short-term mission as a discipleship ministry: "Short-term team missions, therefore, is one of the finest soils in which to see disciples grow."<sup>178</sup> While the use of mission for discipleship, rather than discipleship for mission, is the reverse of what is recommended in this thesis, the author has simple but helpful recommendations for planning a short-term mission team gleaned from verses of Scripture and much experience.

Murdoch is clear to state that while the most urgent message of the book is for thorough discipleship preparation, it is not itself a curriculum. He has used various resources for preparation and encourages the reader to do so. Areas that leaders ought to cover include the spiritual (teaching, prayer, testimonies), relational (team unity), cultural (including language and health), and logistical (insurance, travel documents, packing). Other chapters suggest ways to go about raising funds and debriefing team members. A resource manual is available along with the book. This manual has the materials that

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<sup>177</sup> Lincoln Murdoch, *Launching the Great Go-Mission* (Omaha, Nebraska: Step Up To Life Press, 1992).

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 3.

Murdoch's church uses for mission trips, and recommendations for orientation curriculum. This book, while urging discipleship, is not discipleship material and does not claim to be so.

*Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Resources*

*People, Places and Partnerships: A Workbook for Your Mission Trip Abroad* is written by Sally Campbell-Evans. She is a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) minister with overseas experience, but the book is written on behalf of the Ecumenical Working Group for Mission to the U.S.A. and Canada, affiliated with Church World Service and Witness of the National Council of Churches of Christ (U.S.A.)<sup>179</sup> The book is for those visiting across cultures, and includes poems, quotes, illustrations, Bible verses, questions and space for journaling, and some checklists. The language and exercises emphasize travel more than mission. The format is colorful and engaging, and it covers cross-cultural considerations in a simple and positive way. It includes reflection questions that can be used for group discussion, but not Bible study or discipleship materials.

*Call as Partners in Christ's Service: The Practice of God's Mission* is a written by Sherron George, a mission co-worker in Brazil who has also served as associate professor of evangelism and mission at Austin Theological Seminary. This book is not written specifically for short-term mission teams but for all who would grow their understanding of global mission. A guide for groups and a second appendix with case studies are good aides for creating sessions with small groups or classes. According to the title, partnership is the emphasis. That being said, George begins by tying the concept

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<sup>179</sup> Sally Campbell-Evans, *People, Places and Partnerships: A Workbook for Your Mission Trip Abroad* (Louisville, Kentucky: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1996), 1.

of partnership back to a Trinitarian understanding of mission, and from that point forward provides a thorough and Biblically based theology of mission. The first two chapters are devoted to God sending the Son, and God sending the church in the power of the Holy Spirit. From there, George takes on the issue of attitude in missionaries: "...our way of being and our missional attitudes toward other people, religions and cultures are more important than anything we can build, teach, or give."<sup>180</sup> This book is not written for basic discipleship, but the chapters on missional attitudes of respect, compassion, and humility, and missional practices of observing, participating, receiving and giving, are deeply theological and spiritually formative. It is an excellent resource for mission team leaders.

*When God's People Travel Together: A Trip Leader's Planning Manual* is written by Debby D. Vial, Associate for Peacemaking Partnerships for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This book presents mission as opportunity to be transformed in partnership with others. There is a brief theology of mission and different voices defining partnership at the beginning of the book. The balance is useful checklists, timetables, tips and tasks for before, during, and after group travel. Discipleship or devotional materials are not included, but references are given for supplemental resources, and a short list of Biblical passages are offered for consideration. Pages of reproducible forms are included. This book, while touching on orientation, is not written primarily for that purpose. It is a good resource for practical preparation.

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<sup>180</sup> George, xiv.

*Bible Studies for Mission*, the third volume in the Presbyterian Church published series *When God's People Travel Together*, is authored by mission worker Alice Winters who is Dean of the School of Theology at the Reformed University of Columbia.<sup>181</sup> This study guide is prepared for small group use. It educates participants on aspects of mission such as God's initiative, the practice of partnership, the transformational impact of active discipleship, and the vision of a new society. Five sessions include one to three Biblical passages for study. It is noteworthy that most are taken from the Old Testament; in a number of places connection is drawn between the experiences and messages of the prophets and the situations in which Colombians, and North Americans, find themselves. The theology of mission is from a Latin American perspective and emphasizes openness to personal transformation and solidarity with the poor and oppressed. For example, the text for the study of "mission" is the story of Hagar, representing the oppressed in whom God takes personal interest and for whom he wills justice. Particular hymns are suggested, and stories from Colombia are also included in each session, encouraging reflection and application of the Biblical themes of call, partnership, and mission. The studies cover Biblical ground that might be otherwise overlooked, and includes a liberation perspective that may be more or less familiar to missionaries. The call to incarnational ministry is solid, and the accounts of Christians in Colombia are eye-opening to the realities in a broken world as well as to the damage or good that those in mission may do (and have done).

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<sup>181</sup> Winters, Alice, *When God's People Travel Together*, vol. 3, *Bible Studies for Mission*. (Louisville, Kentucky: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2003).

In conclusion, there is a multitude of guides to short-term mission that are useful for practical preparation and even some theological grounding. Though many texts provide short Biblical readings, sometimes they are as brief as a single verse or are included in a cursory manner. As is always the case with prooftexting, using isolated and brief quotes from scripture can be employment of scripture to reaffirm theological preconceptions. Reading more broadly, and reading thoughtfully and prayerfully, gives greater opportunity for the readers to be shaped by the Word. Few of the short-term mission guides available provide substantial guidance for spiritual formation, and none direct the individual user and the team to engagement with large portions of Scripture. In the rationale for the project design below, the prayerful involvement of mission team members with numerous passages of Scripture in orientation is regarded as very beneficial.

## CHAPTER 4

### PROJECT DESIGN: MISSION TEAMS AS DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Discipling short-term missionaries nurtures their relationship with Christ and equips them for more effective mission service. There are many means by which to disciple Christians, but certain approaches are well suited to short-term mission teams. Short-term mission teams, in turn, lend themselves well to be particularly effective bodies in which to disciple. One of these factors is receptivity related to timing. The time leading up to a short-term mission trip is clearly a “teachable moment” for missionaries. As they prepare for a mission, short-term missionaries are specially challenged and motivated to understand and articulate the faith, to experience the power of God, to learn to surrender their lives. David Bosch describes how the New Testament – the writings and theology of the early church, including the gospels - was written of urgent necessity by a church catapulted into missionary engagement with the world.<sup>182</sup> As a small and pale reflection of the early church, short-term missionaries who anticipate leaping into a context in which they are particularly conscious of their Christian identity in relationship to the world discover somewhat urgent necessities themselves.

The formation of a small group that is the mission team is another factor that well supports discipleship of missionaries. Stephen Mortley, writing on the need for intentional adult spiritual formation observes, “...adult spiritual formation occurs best in the broader

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<sup>182</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 16.



context of the local church. ...the more specific context of small groups is assumed to be the appropriate manner for adults to learn, given a host of cultural, sociological and spiritual factors as the necessity of trust, accountability, interaction and other elements which are vital to adult learning in the nineties. “<sup>183</sup> William Dyrness and James Engel confirm that small groups grow disciples and missionaries: “Recent research has shown that recovery of the dynamic reality of the body of Christ, often experienced in small cell groups within local congregations, invariably leads to more vital worship and greater outreach.”<sup>184</sup> Innagrace T. Diettrich notes that community has tremendous impact on personal formation: “Our identity and our vision are both taught and caught from our interaction with others in diverse social groupings. The question is not whether we will be socialized, but what kind of society will have its way with us. ... We are being formed – cultivated – as a people.”<sup>185</sup> For short-term missionaries, one community context for discipling is immediately provided in the team.

### **Case Study**

The need for, and benefits of, discipling for short-term mission teams is seen in the case study presented here of Faith Presbyterian Church in Tallahassee, Florida. At the end of the twentieth century, the spiritual, ecclesiastical and cultural heritages described in chapter two were evident in the short-term missions program at Faith Presbyterian Church. Faith is a 50-year-old Presbyterian (U.S.A.) congregation of 1,300 members. Since the time of its founding it had an expressed commitment to the support

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<sup>183</sup> Mortley, 4.

<sup>184</sup> Engel and Dyrness, 134.

<sup>185</sup> Diettrich,, 150.

of mission in the world. This participation is manifested in the ongoing support of a number of career missionaries, practical involvement in the local community, and youth and adult mission teams sent out annually.

In the mid 1990's the need for discipling and orientation was seen in the state of the short-term missions program. When the associate pastor for care and outreach arrived in 1996, the church was in the midst of a one-year moratorium on mission trips. Trips had been halted due to behavioral problems on field and what was described as a party spirit for some who made up the teams during their times of service. When the moratorium expired, there were mixed feelings and mixed expectations in the congregation regarding the resumption of mission trips. It became apparent in the application essays for 1998 team members that a variety of motives and hopes were present: opportunity for travel, service to Christ, help for the poor, personal growth, a group experience.<sup>186</sup> Few members could clearly articulate a sense of missional vocation, describe a theology of mission, or place short-term mission as part of a larger movement in the mission of the congregation or a commission for the larger church.

Over the next several years, the associate pastor oriented and led two teams per year in short-term missions. During those periods of preparation, service, and follow-up, the needs and benefits of orientation and discipling for missionaries became clearer. More thorough and thoughtful preparation in terms of discipleship seemed to result in fewer behavioral problems on the field, a greater effectiveness in mission, and a deeper maturing spiritually and vocationally both in terms of service and in terms of

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<sup>186</sup> These are themes present on mission team applications submitted between 1998 and 2002 at Faith Presbyterian Church in Tallahassee, Florida.

discipleship. By 2002 and 2003, the program of orientation had evolved to include a number of personal disciplines and group practices.

The teams participated in a series of Bible studies as a small group. Different materials were used each year, but the amount of Scripture increased over the years as some Biblical illiteracy and theological vagueness were met. By 2003, the teams were reading and reflecting on the entire gospel of John, as well as studying other Scripture selections that were especially relevant to the practice of mission. Various Bible study resources were drawn on, and repetition of themes and Scripture passages was avoided in a two or three year period, recognizing that a portion of the team members were returning.

Texts also were read to help in developing a theology of mission. More so that practical guides, books that emphasized preparation that is personal and devotional and relational were chosen, such as Tim Dearborn's *Short-Term Missions Workbook* and *Beyond Duty: A Passion for Christ, a Heart for Mission*. These were supplemented with articles or texts particularly appropriate for the field of service, such as readings on urban ministry or Latin American culture. Missionary biographies were assigned during some years. Each team member read a different biography and shared with the group what was learned from the witness of one missionary's life.

Team retreats became an important part of the orientation process. There were practical benefits afforded by an extended time away, including the opportunity to live and serve with one another in the course of a full day. Another benefit was the relief of pressure from other engagements in daily life that often cast a shadow on one or two hour

meetings sandwiched between other activities. As helpful as these practical aspects of retreat were, the greatest benefit was the opportunity for spiritual retreat. Singing and prayer and Bible study and the sharing of personal testimonies had a discernable impact in orientating the teams in the way described in chapter two – orientation to Christ. Other activities were included in retreats as well. Worshiping on Sunday morning with a congregation of another culture provided a new opportunity for fellowship and a growing awareness of diversity in the body of Christ. Engaging in service projects together bore witness to the larger community of the presence and work of God. The extra measure of time allowed for cross-cultural games that built team cohesiveness but also raised awareness of ethnocentrism and accompanying attitudes such as paternalism.

Prayer was emphasized throughout the orientation experience, as well as the mission. Early on the teams began to pray for the partner/hosts and those in the community of service. Hosts were able to provide specific prayer requests, and guides to prayer such as *Operation World* were used. For some team members, praying aloud was a new experience, and they were instructed in simple ways to begin. Prayer partners were assigned who listened for needs for prayer from another and then faithfully remembered them before God. In some cases the teams enabled the congregation to participate in prayer by providing an itinerary of the trip and periodically e-mailing back items of praise and concern.

Closely related to prayer was the discipline of journaling, which all team members were asked to maintain. In some weeks assignments for journaling were given, such as in the reflection questions related to Scripture readings. In other weeks members

were simply encouraged to continue writing – prayers, records of their experiences, reflections on ways that God was growing them in relationship to himself, their teammates, and partner/hosts. These journals were continued throughout the trip and became a means by which to trace insights and growth after the trip was completed.

Individual journals became also a means by which to grow more articulate in bearing witness. Many team members had little experience talking about faith issues, and so in writing on their own, and in speaking in the group, they learned how to say what they had experienced and believed as Christians. Simple questions such as, “Why is Easter special to you?” became a way to begin talking about personal faith. Over the course of the orientation, each member prepared a testimony of his or her relationship with Christ, and then shared it with the rest of the group. In some cases these testimonies also were shared on the field of service with partner hosts or others present.

Service projects were not just fillers for retreats but were a practice that the teams engaged in together. Every team met a covenant promise with the congregation to offer service in the local community before leaving for other fields. In this way service was understood as something that happens anywhere and everywhere – not just during trips and not just in foreign countries. The teams served not only by building Habitat Houses or refurbishing campgrounds, but also by ministering within the congregation, including serving a Sunday noontime meal both before and after the trip. The time spent rolling tortillas for enchiladas or pouring water for congregational members at table was formative for service on the field.

Team members also learned how to prepare devotional materials to share with others. In some cases there were specific ministries for which to prepare – lessons for school age vacation Bible students, or adult Sunday school class presentations . In other cases these lessons were prepared for use by the mission team, but were understood to be available should need or opportunity arise for nurture or worship on the field. Team members who had never led a Sunday school class were surprised to discover that they had something to offer others in terms of spiritual nourishment.

Worship was another important practice of the mission teams. On retreat, in group meetings, on the field in evening gatherings and with host congregations, the teams regularly worshipped as bodies. The congregation commissioned the teams in services of worship. When each team returned from the field, they prepared a service and led worship for the home congregation. As with leading devotions, for some it was the first time that they had preached or prayed or read Scripture “in church” with the larger body.

Other elements of preparation were also interwoven into the program of orientation, including team building, cross-cultural training, logistical planning, and fundraising. However, the center of the orientation program was understood to address spiritual formation and Christian practice as a group. The specific programs of orientation used for four teams during these two years are presented in Appendix 1.

In these programs of orientation, and in the practice of mission and follow-up, it became apparent that there were particular themes that were of special importance in the practice of mission, and that were often little mined or understood by those new to short-term mission. These themes were distilled and defined as nine areas for growth –

disciplines - for those who follow Jesus in discipleship and mission. The word “discipline” is used with intentional awareness of its many meanings: a subject for learning, training received, a spiritual practice, the undertaking of a disciple. In the arena of spiritual formation there are many disciplines named. The nine included here are worship, vocation, prayer, kingdom-consciousness, witness, dependency, kinship, service, and stewardship. This list is not meant to be comprehensive or to highlight which disciplines are most important for the Christian. It is meant to highlight disciplines that may be otherwise overlooked but are particularly beneficial for engagement in mission, especially the types of experiences common to short-term mission teams. Each one represents a particular posture in relationship to Christ, posture essential for devotion and service.

These nine disciplines became the areas of assessment for the short-term mission teams from Faith Presbyterian Church who had been discipled and oriented between 2000 and 2003 (Appendix 2). Two to five years after their time of service, team members were provided a copy of the orientation program in which they participated, and were asked about attitudes and practices that may have emerged or grown during the program of orientation for mission. The results of that survey are presented in Chapter Five. In summary, 27 respondents said that they “strongly agreed” or “very strongly agreed” that their mission orientation and experience has results such as, “(I) more clearly recognize God’s reign in my life and the world” or “(I) pray for the world more.” This was affirming that these postures or disciplines for relationship with Christ and engagement for mission can be nurtured in orientation. At the same time, there was some fuzziness

represented in written answers that called for even clearer teaching and more intentional nurture in the program of orientation.

Therefore, a specific program of orientation was developed around the nine disciplines for use by short-term mission teams. This program is presented in Appendix 3: *“Growing as a Disciple, Growing in Mission: A Course of Discipleship for Short-Term Mission Groups.”* It is understood that orientation will include practical and logistical aspects of mission preparation. Several spiritual habits are encouraged throughout the use of the curriculum, including prayer and worship and journaling. However, the heart of the curriculum involves extensive meditation upon Scripture. There is no other such authoritative and spiritually potent source that instructs disciples in the life of faith and ways of mission. Darrell Guder writes:

...the way to the formation of missional communities begins and ends in our confrontation with and by the Scriptures. Intensive study of the New Testament will become missionally incisive if one approaches the task asking, How did this text prepare the early church for its mission, and how does it prepare us for ours? What does this text tell us about the gospel? What makes it good news? What does this text tell us about ourselves? about our world? What does this text show us about the way in which the gospel is to be made known? How does this text challenge our organizational forms and functions? How should our organizational practices change in light of this text? How does this text challenge us to be converted?<sup>187</sup>

Beyond doubt, Scripture is the essential source for understanding the content of the gospel and the means of mission. By immersing missionaries in Scripture it is hoped that their understanding of mission will be shaped by the Word. However, for a yet more basic and fundamental orientation, it is hoped that missionaries will encounter Jesus the Word. Those so engaged can listen for the Word and allow that Word to shape not only

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<sup>187</sup> Guder, 246.



their theology of mission but their souls. Conversion in the practice of mission is part of conversion to Jesus. “Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, ‘If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.’” (John 8:31-32) There is no doubt that the Bible does not just instruct in faith but provides for encounter with the life-giving Christ: “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:30-31)

Immersion in Scripture has additional benefits for the short-term missionary. Scripture teaches of the Jesus to whom disciples bear witness in the world. Speaking of the importance of attending to the primary witnesses to the risen Christ, Stott writes,

Our responsibility in evangelism is neither to create a Christ of our own who is not in Scripture, nor to embroider or manipulate the Christ who is in Scripture, but to bear faithful witness to the one and only Christ there is as God has presented him to the world in the remarkably unified testimony of both the Old and New Testament Scriptures.<sup>188</sup>

Daily readings for mission team members encourage reflection on substantial portions of Scripture. For each week, activities are recommended for the mission team to practice the discipline considered during the previous six days. This ensures that there is application— that spiritual and physical and mental and emotional muscles are exercised to the growth of relationship and service with Christ. So in addition to learning about prayer, the short-term missionaries will be praying. In addition to studying worship, the team will be engaged in worship. In addition to coming to understand what bearing witness means, participants will find ways to be witnesses. Many of the things that short-

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<sup>188</sup> Stott, 48.

term mission teams may do as a matter of course or perfunctorily are tied to specific disciplines as practice so that their spiritual value is identified or restored. For example, the creation of a group covenant can be an exercise in considering relational and incarnational ministry, rather than serving merely as prescribing behavioral rules and consequences. Learning hymns or praise songs together can be team worship rather a show prepared and handy in the group's pocket.

A survey of the lessons in Appendix 3 reveals the importance of each discipline for mission. However, by way of summary, the disciplines are briefly described below, with notes as to their importance for mission, and the ways in which the curriculum encourages application.

## **1. Worship**

Worship is the first discipline mentioned and presented in orientation for mission, as all that humanity is and does is intended for the worship of God. Short-term missionaries may not grasp immediately that the service they offer on the mission field is because of the worship that is represented on Sunday mornings. To place worship first and foremost before missionaries is to help them grasp that God calls them to a communion, necessarily characterized by worship, that then also sends them out to call others to the same. Worship is their highest purpose. Worship is also the means by which they are nurtured and sent in mission. Darrell Guder writes, "The center of any mission community's organized life is its corporate worship. Virtually every theological and confessional tradition represented in North America agrees with this proposition."<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Guder, p. 241-242.

The writings of J.G. Davies reminds one that the horizontal activity of mission must always be tied to the vertical practice of worship: “The Christian mission is always Christological and pneumatological, but the New Testament knows of no Christology or pneumatology which is not ecclesial... Mission is moored to the church’s worship, to its gathering around the Word and sacraments.”<sup>190</sup> Thomas Schattauer’s “inside out” relationship between worship and mission is especially helpful, in which worship is understood of as separation from worldly concerns, or meeting the felt needs of seekers, but glorifying God in the open where the world might be invited to praise God as Lord as well.

In the discipleship program, Scripture readings are included that describe the creation of humanity as being to the glory of God, portray the nations gathered for the worship of God, and demonstrate the relationship between belief and worship. The first and second greatest commandment are included so that the inseparability between loving God and neighbor may be seen, and Romans 12 is included to describe the act of offering one’s whole self as worship. In the activities included, mission teams are encouraged to study a service of worship in which to discern the missional nature of the church even gathered around pulpit, font, and table. Activities that might otherwise be viewed as practical necessities, such as commissioning in worship or preparing songs for singing on field, are framed as at the heart of the meaning of mission.

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<sup>190</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 385.

## **2. Vocation**

The discipline of vocation is included close on the heels of worship so that missionaries may understand that mission is not a particular activity they choose, but it part and parcel of the life of every disciple. This addresses to some extent the problem of voluntarism – the belief that Christians choose whether or not, and how, to participate and support the church's mission. It is granted that particular forms of mission may vary, and different gifts may be required in those varied forms.. But all do well to understand the relationship between baptism and being sent. Missioners are called and claimed for covenant life and participation in God's mission. In the topic of vocation issues of Lordship, obedience, and the sovereignty of God are touched upon.

The scriptures that are selected for reflection upon vocation begin at the beginning of the Christian life as each human being knows it – Jesus calling broken sinners to himself. They move through texts that describe dying to self and living for Christ, adoption into the family of God, being blessed in order to be a blessing, and being sent out as ambassadors and disciple-makers. Mission teams are given activities to practice that include reflecting upon baptism liturgy so that they might tie their spiritual identity to their service, writing a personal mission statement, and studying the lives of saints past and present who demonstrate what it is to walk with Christ.

### **3. Prayer**

The discipline of prayer cannot be included too early in the life of a disciple, the practice of mission, or the orientation for such. Therefore, directions for prayer are included even before the daily and weekly lessons in the curriculum. Missioners are given instruction for several means by which to pray, including tying prayer to their journaling. Prayer is seen as essential for communion with God – abiding in Christ, and for engaging in mission – both a means of participating in mission, and a source of empowerment for mission.

Scripture readings include the example of Jesus in prayer, Jesus' instructions about prayer, and the model of the prayer that he taught his disciples. The efficacy of prayer is highlighted in the story of the persistent widow. Prayer is understood as part of the work of mission in Jesus' instruction to ask God to send out laborers, and in Paul's letters instructing his readers to pray for the effectiveness of those in particular missions, including himself. The role of the Holy Spirit in prayer may encourage those who have previously thought of prayer as a strictly human effort. The activities for prayer instruct missioners in some different means of prayer, including centering prayer, breath prayer, liturgical prayer and team prayer. The group is urged to begin praying for those for and with whom they will serve, and to draw the entire congregation into this ministry of prayer.

### **4. Kingdom-Consciousness**

If church members' understanding of the church is often fuzzy, their understanding of the kingdom of God may be nearly non-existent. The kingdom may be

thought of as a place somewhere beyond the clouds, as a future reality not yet glimpsed, as Christendom, as the institutional church. Congregational life may be equated with kingdom life. An illustration of this is the common practice of “evangelism” by inviting people to church membership; the growth of the church is seen as the goal of mission.

Understanding the relationship between the kingdom of God and mission will help missioners then also understand the place of the church – as being sent in mission *for* the kingdom of God. Growing in their understanding of the kingdom will help orient team members to the Jesus in whom the kingdom is represented, the Jesus who died and rose and is reigning, power for the mission of God in the redemption of the world. There is personal meaning to be gleaned, as well, as missioners understand their own repentance as aligning themselves with the reign of God,<sup>191</sup> “the Lordship of Christ.” Hopeful engagement with the world is also encouraged as missioners begin to understand that Christ has already begun to do a new thing, and his victory will be sure. Finally, kingdom-consciousness helps missioners tie evangelism and social justice, heart and hand, together as they follow the example and promises of Jesus.

Readings on the kingdom include the beginning of Jesus’ ministry with the announcement of the kingdom, the sending of the disciples to proclaim the kingdom by word and deed, and the parables about the kingdom of God. The Lord’s prayer from Matthew is included in order to ponder what it is to pray by word and by one’s life for the coming of the kingdom. The account of Nicodemus is included so that the full spiritual

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<sup>191</sup> See Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 37.

meaning of new life in Christ – in the kingdom - is understood. Activities suggested for the mission team include examining one's life and the world for signs of God's reign, considering how the mission team and individual members might practically bear witness to the kingdom of God in the daily lives as well as in the mission trip.

## **5. Bearing Witness**

Considering the discipline of bearing witness is to help mission team members recognize that their mission work flows out of their experience of the risen Christ, and to distinguish the gospel of Jesus from many other lesser gospels to which they might bear unwitting witness. There are many things that short-term missionaries may feel compelled to share with others, and so it is important to help them focus on the gospel and understand it clearly. For example, often when church members are asked to share their testimony, they tell a story of the church community. This is bearing witness to the work of God. However, it is well also to help them understand and know the Christ who is at work in this community. The discipline of bearing witness is, as the titles of Paul Little's books described, knowing what one believes and saying (confessing) what one believes. Witness also includes hopeful and compassionate action, and these are touched on also in the disciplines of kinship and service. The verbal confession of faith is an important challenge for missionaries to meet. David Bosch writes, "The deed without the word is dumb; the word without the deed is empty."<sup>192</sup> Many Christians, perhaps especially in the mainline denominations, have less experience and less comfort with the word than the

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 420.

deed. Equipping them to confess and profess their faith in a natural, joyful and winsome way is to grow them as disciples and as missionaries.

The scripture readings included for the discipline of witness include examples of the community of faith praising God publicly among the nations, and specific calls to be ready to “give account for the hope that is within you.” The gospel passages telling of Jesus’ death and resurrection, as well as summary accounts of these, are included to grow missionaries’ familiarity with The Story that is at the heart of the gospel. Passages that speak of God’s people as witnesses by vocation (e.g. salt, light) are offered for reflection. The exercises included for the group are designed to help members understand their faith with clarity and articulate it with growing ease. They also encourage the team to examine how personal and corporate life bears witness to Christ in the world.

## **6. Dependency**

Several common characteristics of those who offer themselves for mission service include confidence, activism, and conviction. Those who are most likely to serve in short-term missions may also be those who most find it a challenge to be deferential, dependent, even weak. They are ready to help in their own strength, when both discipleship and mission demand humility and even utter dependence upon God. Such short-term missionaries may be bewildered and even depressed by the natural floundering that happens in cross-cultural contexts, and they may be resistant to submission in a relationship in which they have intended to do good for another. In describing Matthew’s consideration of the challenging frontier context of his readers, David Bosch says that



“...he wishes his community to know that mission never takes place in self-confidence but in the knowledge of our own weakness, at a point of crisis where danger and opportunity come together.”<sup>193</sup> J.G. Davies writes, “Mission is only true when it arises from the acknowledgment of responsible dependency, which is one of the essential aspects of worship.” “Witness” comes from the same Greek word that we translate as “martyr.” A powerful witness is always the result of the work of the Holy Spirit, at work in weak human beings. In fact, Jesus’ story is about God working life out of death, victory out of Jesus’ passion. As Jesus disciples, Christians live in this paradox. “This is, however how authentic mission always presents itself – in weakness.”<sup>194</sup>

The texts included for the discipline of dependency highlight Jesus’ authority and the Spirit’s power in mission: the commissioning of the disciples, the promise of Pentecost, the examples of Peter and John’s spiritually powerful witness in the early church. Teachings are included on the ways of God in working through jars of clay or weakness that his glory might be displayed and his power perfected. Mission teams are encouraged to engage in activities that make them cognizant of their needs, their fears, their desires to control. In addition to exercises that encourage the practice - and acceptance – of dependence upon teammates, questions urge members to recognize the ways in which they are and will be dependent upon their receiver hosts.

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 49.

## 7. Kinship

Many words might have been used for this discipline that is related to *koinonia*. A word currently popular in ecumenical settings is “partnership” in mission. However, in North American society “partner” can mean many things, including a strictly practical relationship for the sake of business. Because Christians are granted relationship to one another in and by Christ - relationships not of their choosing to create or sever - “kinship” is used. It is hoped that short-term missionaries will come to understand that their relationship to those with and for whom they serve are profound and God-given. Perhaps they will grow to understand “partnership” in this way and avoid pitfalls such as individualism, ethnocentrism, paternalism, a development approach to mission, work carried out in isolation from the larger church. A career missionary writes, “Taking two dozen volunteer trips without working side-by-side with the poor is not mission. As long as the poor remain objects of volunteer trips rather than joint subjects in a common enterprise of faith, it’s never going to be mission.”<sup>195</sup> As a tutor in that direction, short-term mission teams are urged to recognize “kinship.” The discipline of kinship also impresses on missionaries the incarnational aspects of the life of faith, especially applied in mission. John Stott writes:

Then there is another aspect of the mission of the Son which is to be paralleled in the mission of the church, names that in order to serve he was sent *into the world*. He did not touch down like a visitor from outer space, or arrive like an alien bringing his own alien culture with him. He took to himself our humanity, our flesh and blood, our culture. He actually became one of us and experienced our frailty, our suffering and our temptations. He even bore our sin and died our death. And now he sends us ‘into the world’ to identify with others as he identified with us (though without losing our Christian identity), to become

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<sup>195</sup> Jeffrey, 6.

vulnerable as he did. It is sure one of the most characteristic failures of us Christians, not the least of us who are called evangelical Christians, that we seldom seem to take seriously this principle of the Incarnation.<sup>196</sup>

To reflect upon kinship is to awaken missionaries to the spiritual unity they are given in Christ with all believers. In the theology of the body of Christ, there is no place for a superior other than Christ the head. Furthermore, the unity found under Christ as head makes possible not just cooperation and mutual submission but also incarnational relationship and true empathy: “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it” (I Corinthians 12:26).

Scripture passages presented for growing in the recognition of kinship include Jesus’ teachings on the vine and the branches, and his own example of humility in the incarnation. Teaching on the body of Christ, with its varied members and gifts yet united by one Spirit, is presented. The story of the Good Samaritan provides a concrete example of true compassion. The activities for the team begin with questions and games that raise awareness of ethnocentrism and cultural assumptions. The team is encouraged to consider field arrangements, lifestyle, and a behavioral covenant and how these may support or undermine incarnational ministry. Finally, team members are provoked to think about how they will view and report on their trip and new relationships: will those with whom they have partnered in ministry be viewed as players in an exciting experience or characters among an interesting scenery, or will they be cherished with respect as brothers and sisters in Christ?

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<sup>196</sup> Stott, 25.

## 8. Service

When thinking of “service,” many congregations envision the classic service project: putting up a cinder block Sunday school classroom, building a Habitat house, cooking in the kitchen at the shelter. These all can be valuable acts of service within the mission of God. However, few people think of service in the radical spirit modeled by Jesus, who “came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). When this model is studied, “service” becomes more a matter of identity than isolated acts. Sometimes mission team members may see the travel and time off as service enough, but are unaware of sacrifices unmade that could enhance their identification with others. There is the problem of mission teams tromping around Appalachia or Africa in new hiking boots and sunglasses with cell phones, camera equipment, stuffed fanny packs and neon polycarbonate water bottles dangling from shoulders and waists. There may be yet more of a problem if they are making forays to the “work site” from a deluxe motel in nice vehicles. Teams can learn to decide thoughtfully what separates true needs from comforts, and what lifestyle will enable them to serve most effectively in their mission. Such lifestyle sacrifices are a very small piece of that to which Jesus calls his followers. Even beyond such practical sacrifices, missionaries can grow in their understanding of the service represented in suffering, and Jesus’ call to solidarity with the poor and oppressed. The willingness to have one’s life uncomfortably shaped into one of service in the way of Jesus becomes a precious and useful offering in mission.

Most of the Scripture readings for the discipline of service are about dying: Jesus' example as the Suffering Servant and the one who washed his disciples' feet; teachings on losing one's life in order to find one's life; prophetic description of the acceptable worship offering to God - practicing justice for and solidarity with the poor and oppressed. The activities for mission teams begin with recognizing the call to continual dying to self by serving others daily in small and practical acts. The team is directed to consider what material and non-materials sacrifices are required for effective mission and true love. The celebration of communion, and reflection on the service of Christ represented in the sacrament, is one means by which the deeper understanding of service may be appreciated.

## **9. Stewardship**

Every disciple receives various trusts by God in the life of faith, the practice of mission. As mission teams serve, one of the greatest hindrances, often unacknowledged by most, is the issue of relative wealth. Poverty is seen and appreciated, but it is a painful stretch for missionaries to recognize wealth as a problem. It has been stated that one of the reasons for the growth in short-term mission is that Westerners now have the mechanical and monetary means to travel for first-hand mission experiences. There has been a flood of airlines tickets and hotel accommodations and suitcases and immunizations and passports and film and travel clothes purchased. The expenses may receive study in regard to the sending congregation's overall budget, but rarely do they receive consideration in regard to the receiving community's standard of living. Jonathan Bonk

may have been writing with career missionaries in mind, but his observations should

be of interest to any disciple/missionary of Christ:

1. Wealthy missionaries cannot identify with the life situations of the poor which their message is intended to address.
2. There does not seem to be a correspondence between what wealthy missionaries preach and what they themselves practice.
3. The gospel of plenty, preached so eloquently and persuasively in the silent language of missionary lifestyle, frequently overrides or distorts poorer people's understanding of the Christian gospel.<sup>197</sup>

Short-term missioners need to hear this word because they may be especially prone to ignore uncomfortable economic disparity, seeing themselves more as “visitors” in context and feeling less the call to incarnational and self-sacrificial ministry. This may be supported by research showing that while short-term mission participants report heightened gratefulness following mission trips, they did not grow less materialistic or give more generously.<sup>198</sup> They may resign themselves to the gulf between rich and poor because of their short sojourn, and they may be comforted by the detachment of tourists because they believe their real lives and immediate relations lie elsewhere. This kind of resignation or detachment is not the option of any disciple of Christ; all are called to invest hearts and treasure in the kingdom, to die to self, to spend themselves for Christ and his mission to a beloved world. Awakening to the self-sacrificing aspect of discipleship and mission, and awakening to one's relationship and responsibility to the poor, can be received as opportunity rather than frustration in short-term mission. It lies within the team members' power to examine their motives and means with a critical eye for true service. It lies within their power to elect a simple lifestyle on the field of

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<sup>197</sup> Bonk, *Missions and Money*, 60-67.

<sup>198</sup> Priest et. al., 438-440.

service, and at home. It lies within their power to interpret any felt deprivations as necessary and fruitful Christian discipline. Upon return, there are opportunities as managers of household and church budgets to deal with affluence, and there are opportunities as consumers and citizens to participate in larger systems as servants.

The readings for the discipline of stewardship exhort mission teams and their members to be willing to leave all in following Jesus, to invest in the kingdom of God. The parable of the master and slaves and talents is included. There are also passages for study that present spiritual gifts, and the good news of the gospel, as treasures which have been entrusted to the church for the blessing of the community of faith as well as the world. Exercises for mission teams exhort members to take stock of their blessings and consider how they may be spent for the cause of Christ. Figuring the cost of the mission and comparing it to the average income in the community of service can be sobering; mission teams may realize afresh that the opportunity is a great trust, the spending of which ought to have hope of bearing significant fruit. The mission team is encouraged to plan for generosity in their mission relationships.

Much of this curriculum is about spiritual formation: pursuing individual and community disciplines for the sake of creating contexts in which God in Christ and Spirit may be at work nurturing, growing, shaping, communing, using. However, the language of “discipleship” rather than “spiritual formation” is used most often, both to stress the nature of relationship between mission participants and their Lord, and to highlight their

identities as the sent ones in mission. It is a program of discipling toward a posture, even more, a relationship - orientation *to Christ*.



## CHAPTER 5

### OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The short-term missions program of Faith Presbyterian Church in the mid 1990s represented many of the struggles of the short-term missions movement throughout North American at the time. Spiritual, historical and cultural influences encouraged the development of a missions program that had lost its way. Not firmly moored to the mission of Jesus, short-term mission trips became self-centered to the point that witness to Christ on field and in the home community was compromised. Further, the understanding of the mission of the church as participating in the mission of God was faint and perhaps indiscernible to some. The one year moratorium that the church session put in place on short-term mission trips provided a useful break from skewed perspectives and practices. When the program began again, it did not resume as it had been, but was recreated with discipleship at the heart of the orientation process. The fruit of this discipling can be described anecdotally: In the following six years, there were minimal behavioral problems on the field, participants who were sent in mission also became more active in Christian education, local outreach, further partnership with receiver hosts from fields of service, and church leadership. They served with vigor on the witness committee and were creative and faithful in encouraging the entire congregation to maintain momentum in a practice of mission that was kingdom-focused

and spiritually substantive. Their contributions to the worship and mission of the congregation are heartening.

As encouraging as the increased and sustained activity of short-term missionaries was in the life of Faith congregation, that was not the goal. This thesis argues that short-term mission is in service of the mission of God, and this mission is rooted in God's communal nature. God is redeeming and gathering up a people unto himself. With the love and glory of God in view, how does one measure growth in devotion, the maturing of faith, the deepening of abiding, the purifying of love, the dying of self, the honing of compassion? Only God can measure these things. However, by way of an attempt at assessment, the participants of the short-term mission teams disciplined and sent between 2000 and 2003 were asked to report their own perceptions of how they had grown. The survey in Appendix 2 was created, asking the 50 members of seven teams to respond to 29 questions. For 28 of these questions, missionaries rated on a scale of 0 (do not agree) to 3 (very strongly agree) the ways in which mission orientation influenced them in theological perspectives, and devotional as well as missional practices. These 28 questions directly reflected the nine disciplines described in chapter four.

To be fair, as one respondent observed, it is difficult after the fact to tease apart that which is the result of orientation and that which is the result of the mission trip. However, this same respondent also noted that the success of the mission was related to the orientation process. It is understood but should also be stated that in preparation and in mission, all fruit is the result of God at work.

27 of the 50 missionaries surveyed returned the surveys anonymously. Because they were returned anonymously, it is impossible to discover the reasons the outstanding surveys were not returned. However, the survey was presented two to five years after the mission experience, and many changes had happened in the lives of those who were surveyed (including moving to another congregation or community). Furthermore, the survey was mailed over a year and a half after the surveyor left ministry in that congregation and community. With these factors in mind, the response is not viewed as poor and the results are useful for consideration. There may be special value in that some length of time had passed since the mission trips had taken place, experiences that are often intense but fade quickly in impact with the resumption of daily life at home.

The lowest response to any one question was an average 2.07: “(I am) more ready to share in the sufferings of others.” The highest response was an average 2.76: “(I) experience mission work as a way of worshiping God.” 2 was “strongly agree” and 3 was “very strongly agree,” in the key. Hence the surveys indicate that the missionaries strongly agreed that their experience of orientation and practice of mission had a lasting, formative, positive and spiritual impact upon them.

At the same time, the written portion of the survey indicated continued opportunity for growth both in discipleship and mission. The answers were written in response to the question: “Please describe briefly your current sense of call as a Christian participating in God’s mission; note how this may have developed since prior to your mission orientation experience.” Some of the further needs were explicitly stated by those surveyed: “In 2001 we didn’t do enough ‘sacrifice’ and personal sharing.” “My

own family needs are most often the hardest to meet. I'm learning to schedule time to simply 'be with' them as I do for God and others.'" "More reading background should be done as the establishment of a specific mission – i.e. work of previous missionaries – understanding culture most desirable before immersion."

Some of the needs for continued growth are evident in maturing understandings of mission represented in language stressing gratitude but not a self-sacrificial stance. However, overall the type of movement described in the written statements is consistent with a theologically sound understanding of mission that is in relationship with Christ: "...my mission orientation has helped me to be more open and understanding of others and to just be contagious for Christ." "Thank you for helping me to learn about God's love." "As a disciple, I am called to act – and mission work has shown me the Grace of God through the actions and sufferings of others and how I should serve God on a daily basis." "I am convinced God has his church in the world for mission, and as a part of Christ's body I am a part of that mission to the world." "I am redeemed not so I can be saved, but so that through my salvation others too might come to know the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. I have not earned my salvation, but in receiving it from God I am called to His work so that in my service others can also see God."

Feedback along these lines supports the thesis that in a discipling approach to short-term mission orientation, missionaries may grow in their devotion to Christ as well as their effectiveness in mission. Discipleship is essential to mission.

### **Recommendations for the Future**

With the effectiveness of discipling for short-term missionaries confirmed, the program of orientation for short-term mission teams presented in Appendix 3 was developed. This curriculum includes some of the Scripture passages that had the most impact in mission team orientations, as well as new passages that can further clarify and support the disciplines represented. The exercises recommended for each week and each discipline also include those that were most fruitful and successful in the process of orientation. Additional exercises have been added to fill in gaps where application was unclear or practice was thin. It is hoped that this curriculum will be used along with other elements for the orientation of short-term mission teams sent by congregations.

Even before short-term teams are oriented, there is also a need for pastors and other church leaders to be trained for discipling short-term missionaries. Priest, et. al. have observed:

U.S. Christians involved in STM vastly outnumber those involved in career missionary service.... But too often seminary classes and missiological publications address only those involved in, or preparing for, career missionary service. The larger audience of those involved in STM is ignored.

...Trinity's mission faculty, until recently, have tended to ignore the phenomenon or to express ambivalent or negative opinions about it. That is, this phenomenon is activist, populist, and largely unrelated to formal theological education and formal missiology.

Proverbs 19:2 (NIV) tells us, "It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way."<sup>199</sup>

In answer to such a need, some of the curriculum prepared for this project is being used and presented in a seminary course at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary (PCUSA) in the fall of 2006: "Planning and Leading Short-Term Mission

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<sup>199</sup> Priest, et. al., 434.

Trips.” The syllabus for this course is included in Appendix 4. It is used with the hope and prayer that pastors and prospective pastors will deepen their appreciation for the essential place of discipleship in short-term mission orientation, and be equipped to provide such nurture. As more and more Christians step out of the pews and present themselves for short-term mission service, may they be blessed by God. Through their service, may God be glorified, and may God’s love be satisfied, as he gathers his beloved creation unto himself in restored communion and worship.

## APPENDIX A

### TWO SAMPLE PROGRAMS FOR GROUP ORIENTATION INCLUDING DISCIPLESHIP ACTIVITIES

Prepared for and Used by Four Short-Term Mission Teams  
Sent by Faith Presbyterian Church, Tallahassee, Florida

2002-2003

### **Schedule for Orientation for Brazil and Denver Mission Teams - 2002**

Texts: *From Mission Tourists to Global Citizens*, Tim Dearborn – both teams. (Pre-publication version of the *Short-Term Missions Workbook*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2003.)

Dearborn, Tim. *Beyond Duty: A Passion for Christ, A Heart for Mission*. Monrovia, California: MARC, 1997. Brazil Team.

Stiles, J. Mack. *Mack & Leeann's Guide to Short-Term Missions*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2000. – Brazil Team  
*God's Heart for the City* – Denver

Presbyterians For Renewal - Son Servants Material – Denver

The Bible

Orientation Schedule: (Sometimes meeting together, and then breaking into the 2 teams):

#### **JANUARY**

|     |                 |           |   |
|-----|-----------------|-----------|---|
| Sun | 6 <sup>th</sup> | 9:30 a.m. | During Sunday school hour, meet teammates, receive study materials, review orientation schedule |
|-----|-----------------|-----------|---|

|     |                  |      |   |
|-----|------------------|------|---|
| Sun | 13 <sup>th</sup> | 12-2 | "The God of Mission and the Mission of God" |
|-----|------------------|------|---|

#### **FEBRUARY**

|     |                 |      |  |
|-----|-----------------|------|--|
| Sun | 3 <sup>rd</sup> | 12-2 | "The Place of Short-term mission in the Purposes of God" |
|-----|-----------------|------|--|

|     |                  |      |  |
|-----|------------------|------|--|
| Sun | 17 <sup>th</sup> | 12-2 | "Understand Cultures, Delighting in Differences" |
|-----|------------------|------|--|

#### **MARCH**

|                |                |  |
|----------------|----------------|--|
| <b>Fri-Sun</b> | <b>1st-3rd</b> | <b>RETREAT:</b> Service project, worship with cross-cultural congregation<br>"Maximizing Growth"<br>"Working Together as a Team" |
|----------------|----------------|--|

|     |                  |      |   |
|-----|------------------|------|---|
| Sun | 17 <sup>th</sup> | 12-2 | "Embracing Change, Adjusting to New Ways of Life" |
|-----|------------------|------|---|

#### **APRIL**

|     |                 |      |                         |
|-----|-----------------|------|-------------------------|
| Sun | 7 <sup>th</sup> | 12-2 | "Communicating Clearly" |
|-----|-----------------|------|-------------------------|

|     |                  |      |                             |
|-----|------------------|------|-----------------------------|
| Sun | 21 <sup>st</sup> | 12-2 | "Staying Fresh Spiritually" |
|-----|------------------|------|-----------------------------|

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| April 28 <sup>th</sup> | COMMISSIONING IN WORSHIP<br>SERVE LUNCH TO CONGREGATION |
|------------------------|---|

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Debriefing | After each team returns; to be announced |
|------------|--|



**Schedule for Orientation for Malawi and Florida Big Bend Mission Teams - 2003**  
**Faith Presbyterian Church**  
**Tallahassee, Florida**

Curriculum: In part drawn from *Go Prepared*, Teams Commissioned for Christ International (video recording). Orlando, Florida: Teams Commissioned for Christ International, 1999. (Video segments shown in italics)

May, Stan. "Short-Term Mission Trips are Great IF...", *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 36, (2000), 444-449.

Slater, Bryan A. "Short-Term Missions: Biblical Considerations," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 36, (2000), 452-457.

Slimbach, Richard. "First, Do No Harm," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 36 (October 2000): 428-441.

| <b><u>Date</u></b> | <b><u>Day</u></b> | <b><u>Time</u></b>     | <b><u>What</u></b>   |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--|
| 2/16               | Sun               | 12:00-2:00             | Getting to Know One Another<br><i>Laying the Foundation</i><br>Bible Study "Smelly People"<br>Finances and Fundraisers<br>Malawi: Passport application<br>Homework: Gospel of John; Handouts                             |
| 3/2                | Sun               | 12:00-2:00             | <i>Spiritual Preparation</i><br>Bible Study "Reconciling People"<br>Establishing Devotional Habits for Mission<br>Malawi: Health Check<br>Big Bend: Outreach Planning<br>Homework  |
| 3/16               | Sun               | 12:00-2:00             | <i>Team Spirit</i><br>Behavioral Covenants and our Witness<br>Bible Study "People with Beautiful Feet"<br>Faith Sharing<br>Malawi: African Travel; Church Talks<br>Big Bend: Outreach Planning<br>Homework               |
| 4/4-5              | Fri               | 5:00-9:30<br>8:00-5:30 | Teams Retreat (may leave Fri. night - away)<br>Bible Study: "People with Welcoming Hands"<br><i>Cross-Cultural Training</i><br><i>Ministry Without Dependency</i><br>Faith Sharing – in word and deed<br>Service Project |

|                     |        |            |  |
|---------------------|--------|------------|--|
| 4/6                 | Sun    | 12:00-2:00 | Teams Meeting<br>Bible Study: "Contagious People"<br>Packing Lists<br><i>Re-Entry</i><br>Malawi: About South Africa<br>Big Bend: Outreach Planning<br>Homework |
| 4/27                | Sun    | a.m.       | Help with fourth Sunday luncheon;<br>Tentative date for commissioning of teams   |
| 6/1                 | Sun    | 12:00-1:30 | Malawi Team Meeting – Final Preparations   |
| 6/16                | Mon    | 6:00 a.m.  | Malawi team departs (maybe night before)   |
| 6/29                | Sun.   | 12:00-2:00 | Big Bend Team Meets – Final Preparations   |
| 7/3                 | Thurs. |            | Malawi Team returns (maybe day before)   |
| 7/6                 | Sun.   | 8:30       | Big Bend Team Attend worship; leave for Quincy   |
| 7/13                | Sun.   | 3:00       | Big Bend Team Returns  |
| Debriefing Meetings |        |            | After return; dates to be announced  |

## Mission Team Orientation – Week One

### Getting to Know One Another

What is your middle name – and where did you get it?

What is one word you would use to describe Jesus?

Give one reason why you are here.

### Laying the Foundation<sup>200</sup>

God has a deep passion for the unreached and lost, and has from the very beginning of the human story. Where does mission begin? With creation.

The fall: Adam and Eve sinned; and we like them. God's first question to them was: "Where are you?" His first act was to reach out – an act of mission! He sought Adam and Eve out; he has sought out people in all places throughout history – first through Israel, who was called to be a light to the nations:

*These I will bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations. (Isaiah 56:7)*

The focus in the Old Testament was on Israel being the location where God was worshipped. "Come worship."

Then came Christ, the promised Messiah through Israel. He died for our sin, and rose from the dead – demonstrating and offering us new life. And he has sent us out with this good news to the whole world in the Great Commission:

*Matthew 28:18-20 All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always even to the end of the age.*

In the New Testament, there is a sending out. "Go and make disciples." The emphasis shifts from "come" to "go."

You are being sent as an ambassador of the Savior to the world!

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<sup>200</sup> Notes from *Go Prepared* by Teams Commissioned for Christ International, Inc. Orlando, FL. 1999.

BIBLE STUDY: “Smelly People”<sup>201</sup>

## 2 Corinthians 2:12-3:6

- What have you liked best about parades in your life?
- What gives us confidence in our Christian procession?
- How can you spread the aroma of Christ in your home?
  - o In your workplace or school?
  - o On your mission trip?
- What would the effects on others be?
- If you were the only “Bible” someone else had to read, how much of the gospel would they grasp?

## Finances and Fundraisers

Malawi team members: It will be very important for each team members to raise as much of the \$600-\$700 shown as possible. This represents only a third of the cost of the trip. This year in particular, the church is sacrificing to send us to Africa. Each of us is also called to sacrifice in order to answer God’s call. Please start planning now to raise these funds. Ideas: Putting aside birthday gifts; asking family/friends to help sponsor you; doing odd jobs; start saving weekly (\$42 per week from now until the time when we leave.) Scholarship support is available – in addition to that which you raise on your own.

## Brainstorming for group fundraising:

**Malawi** – Please have a passport valid through August, 2003. If you do not, please apply now. Applications can be picked up from most post offices; many shops take passport pictures. Safety and travel advisories: Malawi is a very stable country; the State Department has no special advisories for U.S. Citizens traveling to Malawi at this time (see attached). We will plan and prepare to go to Africa in June. However, with impending war, we need to remain flexible regarding unnecessary risks, and being used by God in a variety of ways to support mission.

## Homework

ALL: Please read the gospel of John. (This is about 3 pages in your Bible per day). Please answer these questions on paper so that you may turn them in.

- Read again the story of Jesus forgiving and calling Peter at the end of the John. Think of the time which was the closest you have come to blowing it so badly that you might have felt God wouldn’t want to speak to you (you don’t have to write

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<sup>201</sup> Study questions from the *Serendipity Bible Study for Groups*, Littleton, Colorado: Serendipity House, 1988.

this part down). Now answer – what did you discover about God in this experience?

- What does John's gospel tell you about Jesus ability to forgive and heal us? Write down one or two verses that you especially liked on this topic.
- If you were writing a book about Jesus' work in your life, what would some of the chapter titles be?
- What has been "brought to light" for you through reading John's gospel?
- Think about and fill out the worksheet attached.
  
- Pray: For the people to whom you are being called to minister. For our world. For yourself and your teammates as you seek to grow as a Christian and become prepared to share God's love with others in a cross-cultural setting. Other prayer requests:

Malawi:

Please read these handouts (it's not recommended to read all three in the same sitting):

May, Stan. "Short-Term Mission Trips are Great IF...", *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 36, (2000), 444-449.

Slater, Bryan A. "Short-Term Missions: Biblical Considerations," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 36, (2000), 452-457.

Slimbach, Richard. "First, Do No Harm," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 36 (October 2000): 428-441.

## Mission Team Orientation – Week Two

### Opening Prayer

#### **Homework Review: Share with the group:**

The worksheet from John

The verse(s) you jotted down that were special to you

Why those verses are special to you

#### **Spiritual Preparation<sup>202</sup> (Video lesson 2)**

As you go, remember to: Go as a servant of Jesus Christ; go in a spirit of humility; be culturally sensitive, be filled with the Holy Spirit.

You can't do anything apart from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit: gives you new birth; illumines your mind to scripture; helps you pray; fills your life with the fruits of the Spirit; helps you to witness.

Jesus said: *"Apart from me, you can do nothing."* John 15:5

Practice "Spiritual Breathing Exercises:"

"Exhale," and in so doing, confess your sins. Ask God to show you the things in your life that are robbing you from your relationship with Him. Then "be filled with the Holy Spirit." Things that help:

Spend time reading the Word of God. Pray and fast.

ABOUT JOURNALING: Some ways to journal:

Write poetry to God; write songs to God; write letters to God; write prayers to God; write down meaningful scripture; write what God reveals about himself.

? What ministry can you do apart from the Holy Spirit? What does the Holy Spirit provide for you?

? ABOUT WORSHIP: Together as a group, choose three songs that we will practice together that we can share with those to whom we minister this summer. Write them down here:

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<sup>202</sup> Notes from *Go Prepared* by Teams Commissioned for Christ International, Inc, Orlando, FL. 1999.

**Practice writing your first journal entry here. Take five minutes while we are all quiet to write your prayer. Write a prayer to God telling him your hopes and fears for this trip, and telling him what you need (Forgiveness? Courage? Faith? Peace?) to be useful to him.** Buy a journal or notebook to be used for this for the rest of our orientation, and on the trip.

## GROUP BIBLE STUDY “Reconciling People”

### 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

<sup>203</sup> *For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

*(16) So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf; Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As God’s fellow workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain. For he says, “In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.” I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.*

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<sup>203</sup> NIV Scripture Translation; Study questions from the *Serendipity Bible Study for Groups*, Littleton, Colorado: Serendipity House, 1988.

? If you were appointed as ambassador for our country, where would you like to be sent?

? What does “reconciliation” mean? Share with one another as you look at the scripture passage how Christ has reconciled us to God. Take a quiet moment and write down here a story or event from your life that illustrates reconciliation to God:

? How does God use us in reconciling other people to himself?

? How have you shared your faith in the past? How would you like to learn to share your faith? What are your hopes and fears about sharing faith?

Establishing Devotional Habits for Mission

**Homework:** Buy a journal this week.

- ✓ You can start writing your homework responses in it.
- ✓ More important, start learning how to write down some prayers and thoughts, favorite verses of scripture.
- ✓ Start a list of prayer requests for your team, the world, the people and place where you are going, your self.

This week in your journal, rewrite one of your favorite passages from John. You can change the setting to “make it modern,” or just write it in words that fit your vocabulary. Here are some suggested chapters: John 3 (Nicodemus), John 4 (Samaritan Woman), John 6 (Bread of Life), John 10 (Shepherd), John 11 (Raising Lazarus), John 13 (washing the disciples feet), John 15 (vine and branches), John 19 (Jesus’ death), John 20 (Jesus’ resurrection).

Malawi: Health Check (medical information sheet provided)

All Team Members: Please fill out the medical release form and return it next meeting.

**Big Bend: Outreach Planning**

**Homework:** See above under journaling

**Next meeting: March 16, noon.**



### **Mission Teams Orientation – Week Three**

#### **Getting to Know One Another**

What is inspiring to you? (Music, reading, books, Bible, talking with others, sunset...)  
Share one time of inspiration by God with the person with whom you are paired up.

#### **Capturing the Team Spirit<sup>204</sup>**

*For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were baptized into one body – whether Jews or Greek, whether slaves or free – and have all been made to drink on Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many. I Corinthians 12:12-14*

#### **Four Personality Types**

1. Choleric – aggressive leader, strong, driven, type A, insensitive, angry
2. Sanguine – encouraging, loving, outgoing, not detail oriented, impulsive
3. Melancholic – creative, perfectionistic, moody, “my way is right”
4. Phlegmatic – friend of all, calm, cool, loyal, even-keeled, too cautious

Which type are you? How can God use your strengths on this trip? How can you guard against your weaknesses impacting the outreach negatively?

#### **Go With the Flow**

- God is in control – we are not. Allow him to lead.
- Stress – cultural differences and new situations may cause discomfort and stress.
- Trials bring perseverance and maturity – stress can grow you. James 1.
- During stressful times, ask God what you can learn about yourself.
- Focus on the SOLUTIONS.
- Go with the flow.

What are some of your expectations for this trip? What kinds of changes would throw you off balance? What can you do to “get your sea legs?”

#### **Four Levels of Conflict**

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<sup>204</sup> Notes from *Go Prepared* by Teams Commissioned for Christ International, Inc. Orlando, FL. 1999.

1. The real issue: Focus on the problem/conflict itself; don't be distracted from the real issue and fall into the next levels of conflict.
2. Blame-shifting: anger, ignoring the problem. We don't accept our part of the problem. We attack others with our words or actions. We look the other way and pretend there is no problem.
3. Questioning and confusion.
4. Leaving the mission – we become frustrated and discouraged and give up.

What to do? Stay on target, focus on the problem, work together to solve it, learn from it. Do not allow yourself to become distracted.

Brainstorm: Conflict management plan:

The plan we came up with together as a team:

- a. Pray
- b. Talk with the person
- c. Have a mission team leader speak with both of you

**Behavioral Covenants** – From our application:

Some of the qualities that are needed in team members: Good humored, easy going, able to laugh at themselves, willing to give up the comforts of home, patient, no smoking or drinking alcoholic beverages, willing to share about their faith, flexible to change. It is very important that team members are also sensitive and submissive to host instructions when crossing cultures. For example, in Malawi, women must wear skirts below the knee with slips at all times (this used to be a law!). Sometimes the norms of other groups will not “make sense” to us, but missionaries are incarnational: Christ gave up his heavenly prerogatives and took on our form and lifestyle to relate to and minister to us. In mission we, too, give up some of our own “prerogatives” and try to identify with others in reaching out to them. Both adults and youth will be asked to abide by the requirements of Faith church policy and the requests of our hosts, including:

- No alcohol, drug or tobacco use, or possession of weapons
- Modest dress
- Respect for the people among whom we are ministering
- Not going anywhere on one's own
- Observing curfews

**GROUP BIBLE STUDY:**<sup>205</sup> *“People With Beautiful Feet”*

Romans 10:1-15

In what ways were the Jews seeking to be right with God? How do you see people taking this path today?

How can “doing for God” sometimes get in the ways of knowing Him?

What does it mean to “confess Jesus is Lord?”

What are the things that compete with your allegiance to Christ as Lord?

What are some of the distinctive beliefs of the Christian faith?

How can sharing each of them be a blessing to others?

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<sup>205</sup> NIV Scripture Translation; Some study questions taken or adapted from the *Serendipity Bible Study for Groups*, Littleton, Colorado: Serendipity House, 1988.

**Homework:**

In preparation for our retreat, look over your completed homework from the book of John. In particular: Have read through the book; have chosen a favorite verse and noted why it is special to you; have noted a favorite aspect of Jesus; rewrite one of the stories or teachings in John in your own words or in a modern setting. Review the above notes from today's Bible study. Then work on writing a testimony to share with the rest of your team. This can be 2-10 minutes long. A suggested outline:

1. Read a verse from John that says something special to you about Jesus; tell us why it is special to you.
2. Share about a time that you needed God – and then tell about how He helped you.
3. Tell about what it means to “call Jesus your Lord” in response to his love and grace toward you. How have you dedicated, or are you dedicating, your life to following him, serving him, or loving him?

OUR NEXT MEETING IS OUR RETREAT. Please come prepared with your homework caught up and your testimony (above) prepared. This will be a fun time of growing together so plan to laugh as well!

**Mission Teams Orientation – Week Four**

**FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
2003 MISSION TEAMS RETREAT  
April 4-5, 2003  
Dogwood Acres, Vernon, Florida**

**6:00** Arrive, unpack in cabins

**6:30** Dinner

**7:15** Singing

**7:30** Getting to Know You Team Building Exercises

**8:00** *Cross-Cultural Training:* **Cultural Lesson**

**9:00** Testimonies: Eddie, Karen, Laura, Chip

**SATURDAY**

**8:30** **Breakfast: Kansas-Rome Trip**

*You're Not in Kansas Anymore!*

*When in Rome...*

Through the breakfast meal please follow the cultural prescriptions given to your group. After breakfast we will de-brief on how the two groups interacted and what we learned about ethnocentrism, judgment, flexibility, humility and grace in crossing cultures.

**9:00** **Worship**

**Singing**

**Testimonies: Beth, Nathan, Mary, Darden**

**GROUP BIBLE STUDY:** *People With Welcoming Hands*

**9:30** **Work Project** – Service to the Presbytery by Refurbishing the Camp

**12:00** **Lunch**

**1:00** **Pack up/clean up cabins**

**1:30** *Ministry Without Dependency:* **Discussion**

**2:30 Testimonies: Amanda, Bob**

**3:00 Prayer; Leave for Home!**

### **Mission Team Orientation – Week Five**

#### **Getting to Know One Another**

Reflections from the retreat on growing and serving together.

#### **Video Lesson: Re-Entry<sup>206</sup>**

*The short-term mission experience is like being uprooted from everything that is familiar back home and being transplanted to another part of the world. God plants you in another (place). Your roots expand. Your faith grows. And then, you return home.*

- You return home as a different you. It is important to process what God has done in your life.
- You are now looking at the world through a different set of eyes. Yours eyes have been transformed through the short-term mission experience.
- You come back with a new set of questions to ask. God has changed your world-view and how you spend your money. “Business as usual” will not be easy.

? – How might you change?

? – How can you be prepared for how much change you will have to face about yourself?

What reactions can we expect from re-entry? We may respond one of three ways:

- Isolation: They isolate themselves from the mainstream of life.
- Imitation: They blend into the mainstream. They want to get back to normal.
- Integration: They put lessons learned into action in their life.

Let us strive to integrate our experiences from our mission trip – to forget neither where we have been, nor where we are called to.

*We will have a time of debriefing with each mission team upon return home and consider further how we can make the most of our experiences. Dates will be announced according to team.*

#### **GROUP BIBLE STUDY: “Contagious People”**

Matthew 16:24-26 (NIV): *Then Jesus said to His disciples: “If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to*

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<sup>206</sup> Notes from *Go Prepared* by Teams Commissioned for Christ International, Inc. Orlando, FL. 1999.

*save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

We need to live with an end in mind – with a purpose to why we are called.

To what is God really calling you?

What is your destination?

Take a moment to write a mission statement, or an epitaph! – to help get some clarity and vision for our mission and your life. Write initial thoughts on it here, and continue to work on it in the coming weeks in your journal:

### **Learning About Mission Contexts**

Teams divide up to share homework and learn about the contexts of southern Africa and the Big Bend community of Florida.

### **Packing Lists**

Teams review packing lists for respective trips. Lists provided.

## APPENDIX B

### SURVEY OF SHORT-TERM MISSIONERS WHOSE ORIENTATION INCLUDED DISCIPLING

50 Short-term missionaries served on seven teams  
sent by Faith Presbyterian Church, Tallahassee, Florida

2000-2003



*Surveys were mailed out in December of 2005 to 50 participants of seven mission teams that were sent out by Faith Presbyterian Church between 2000 and 2003.*

### **Evaluation Form for Orientation for Short Term Trips in Mission**

**Statements regarding short-term mission trip orientation are listed below. Recalling the orientation you received with Beth McCaw at Faith Presbyterian Church, please rate to what degree you agree or disagree about the impact of orientation.**

**Orientation included the program of preparation for mission that your team completed as a group. Elements of your orientation likely included group Bible study, reading articles/book(s), journaling, a retreat, a service project, worship, prayer partners, preparation of a Christian testimony and devotional, instruction and reading on mission (perhaps including the history of mission and missionaries/biographies), and cross cultural sensitivity exercises (games) and teaching.**

**3 = Very strongly agree**

**2 = Strongly agree**

**1 = Generally agree**

**0 = Do not agree**

**X = Do not understand the question/cannot comment**

#### **Orientation influenced me to:**

- 1) Believe that every Christian is called to mission.
- 2) See my effectiveness as a mission team member as directly related to my relationship to Jesus as his disciple.
- 3) See “mission” as *God’s* mission more than *my/our* mission.
- 4) Experience mission work as a way of worshiping God.
- 5) See acts of worship as one of the ways I participate in God’s mission.
- 6) Deepen my commitment to obediently and trustingly follow Christ as Lord.
- 7) Believe I have been blessed by God for a purpose beyond myself – i.e. to bless others.
- 8) Have a deeper sharing in God’s love for the world.

- 9) More clearly recognize God's reign in my life and the world.
- 10) Grow in my understanding of the Christian faith/the gospel.
- 11) Better identify and describe how God has been at work in my life.
- 12) Grow more comfortable in sharing my faith with others.
- 13) Become more ready to serve others even when it involves personal sacrifice.
- 14) Be more active in service now than before orientation/the mission trip.
- 15) See my service as related to Jesus' service.
- 16) Experience a stronger sense of connection and commitment to those for whom God is calling the church in mission.
- 17) See God as a "missionary God" - in mission to us in Jesus.
- 18) Appreciate more the unity that all Christians have in Christ.
- 19) Grow in sensitivity to other perspectives, cultures and worldviews.
- 20) Be more ready to share in the suffering of others.
- 21) Grow in dependence upon God (Holy Spirit) to do the work to which I am called.
- 22) Grow in submission to the body of Christ (other Christians, such as those on the field where we served) to do the work to which we, the church, are called.
- 23) Pray more.
- 24) Pray for the world more.
- 25) Believe my prayers make a difference in God's work.
- 26) Have a stronger recognition that all I have belongs to God.
- 27) Have a greater sense of connection and commitment to those in need.
- 28) Give more generously to God's work.

29) Please describe briefly your current sense of call as a Christian participating in God's mission; note how this may have developed since prior to your mission orientation experience.

30) Trip(s) in which you participated:

Other comments:

**Thank you** for your time and feedback. Please return this survey to *Beth McCaw, UDTs*, 2000 University Avenue, Dubuque, IA, 52001, by mail at your earliest convenience or before the end of January. (Some return envelopes provided in an earlier mailing require an extra stamp – sorry!) You may also reply by fax to 563-589-3110, or e-mail to [BMcCaw@dbq.edu](mailto:BMcCaw@dbq.edu) –for e-mail please list question numbers and answers.

### Results of Survey of Short-Term Missioners Who Were Discipled During Orientation

27 surveys were returned for a response rate of 54%. The average response to each question below is shown.

**3 = Very strongly agree**

**2 = Strongly agree**

**1 = Generally agree**

**0 = Do not agree**

**X = Do not understand the question/cannot comment**

#### **Orientation influenced me to:**

- 1) Believe that every Christian is called to mission. **2.55**
- 2) See my effectiveness as a mission team member as directly related to my relationship to Jesus as his disciple. **2.33**
- 3) See “mission” as *God’s* mission more than *my/our* mission. **2.55**
- 4) Experience mission work as a way of worshiping God. **2.76**
- 5) See acts of worship as one of the ways I participate in God’s mission. **2.33**
- 6) Deepen my commitment to obediently and trustingly follow Christ as Lord. **2.37**
- 7) Believe I have been blessed by God for a purpose beyond myself – i.e. to bless others. **2.48**
- 8) Have a deeper sharing in God’s love for the world. **2.52**
- 9) More clearly recognize God’s reign in my life and the world. **2.48**
- 10) Grow in my understanding of the Christian faith/the gospel. **2.52**
- 11) Better identify and describe how God has been at work in my life. **2.48**
- 12) Grow more comfortable in sharing my faith with others. **2.37**
- 13) Become more ready to serve others even when it involves personal sacrifice. **2.12**  
**(one no response)**
- 14) Be more active in service now than before orientation/the mission trip. **2.30**

- 15) See my service as related to Jesus' service. **2.37**
- 16) Experience a stronger sense of connection and commitment to those for whom God is calling the church in mission. **2.60 (two no response)**
- 17) See God as a "missionary God" - in mission to us in Jesus. **2.11**
- 18) Appreciate more the unity that all Christians have in Christ. **2.52**
- 19) Grow in sensitivity to other perspectives, cultures and worldviews. **2.63**
- 20) Be more ready to share in the suffering of others. **2.07**
- 21) Grow in dependence upon God (Holy Spirit) to do the work to which I am called. **2.26**
- 22) Grow in submission to the body of Christ (other Christians, such as those on the field where we served) to do the work to which we, the church, are called. **2.37**
- 23) Pray more. **2.33**
- 24) Pray for the world more. **2.48**
- 25) Believe my prayers make a difference in God's work. **2.28 (two no response)**
- 26) Have a stronger recognition that all I have belongs to God. **2.19**
- 27) Have a greater sense of connection and commitment to those in need. **2.63**
- 28) Give more generously to God's work. **2.48**
- 29) Please describe briefly your current sense of call as a Christian participating in God's mission; note how this may have developed since prior to your mission orientation experience.

### **Written Responses:**

Right now as a college student, I feel that my mission is to show God's love on this campus. I see much more diversity on a day to day basis and feel that my mission orientation has helped me to be more open and understanding of others and to just be contagious for Christ.

This year I felt called to go on another mission trip to Mississippi to help with hurricane clean up. Doing that has made me more hopeful and more willing to serve. This has

developed since my prior mission orientation because seeing the hope of people when on a trip gave me hope.

I just have a greater awareness of and sensitivity to my equality with all people from all walks of life. I also feel a stronger call to care for those in need. (Thank you for helping me to learn about God's love.)

In 2001 we didn't do enough "sacrifice" and personal sharing. I'm ready to do more. The questions I answered "3" were directly because of orientation – orientation needs to be even stronger in message about belonging to God and depending on God. Also – how "mission work" can be done everyday, even at home.

All that I individually have on that our country has is only "ours" because it's entrusted to us by God, to share and use for the greater good.

Being involved in missions has exposed me to the world and experience that GOD'S love is everywhere. It is BIG! I have also seen that even in our own church (Faith) has its own mission within.

Since participation in mission work, I realize that I must be an active (rather than passive) member in the Christian community. As a disciple, I am called to act – and mission work has shown me the Grace of God through the actions and sufferings of others and how I should serve God on a daily basis.

Currently involved in a recovery program for hurting teenager at church. Help sponsor a few couples doing mission work in Tampa and in college ministry. Before going to Haiti, I thought was God was large but still thought he mainly worked through college ministry (because that's where I was saved) yet in Haiti realized God was much more involved in the fine details of peoples lives all over the world. Also have gained understanding of the church and how God uses the church to reach the nations.

I am convinced God has his church in the world for mission, and as a part of Christ's body I am a part of that mission to the world.

I see myself as a leader called to influence, encourage, and/or lead the church to becoming a place where spirituality and the worldly are synthesized, where physical, intellectual, practical, emotional, relational and rational gifts are called upon in order to bring (to the best of our ability and the will of God) the kingdom on earth.

I believe that we are all called to be missionaries to reach out to others whether at home or abroad and in our daily lives as well as on "mission trips." I think I do have a stronger sense of this after participation in a mission trip and especially after working with Christians in another country to reach out to others.

I am redeemed not so I can be saved, but so that through my salvation others too might come to know saving gospel of Jesus Christ. I have not earned my salvation, but in receiving it from God I am called to His work so that in my service others can also see God.

First I strongly recognize my own need to spend time alone with God in prayer and in study each day. I also focus on watching for and listening for Him throughout everyday in conversation etc. My own family's needs are most often the hardest to meet. I'm learning to schedule time to simply "be with" them as I do for God and others. Lastly, I'm called currently to anew mission in Hospice – a commitment of 1 year, beginning in February '06. I'll also lead a women's 10 week Bible study starting Feb. '06. And I'm helping plan women's federal prison Bible studies and serve as a prayer warrior for this ministry – after serving in the prison and mentoring there as well as helping to facilitate the studies.

I would have to say I have certainly grown in my faith since prior to mission orientation. It was wonderful to be in mission orientation with others who had already been on mission trips and who I could look up to. It was especially encouraging to hear others statements of faith. Right now I feel called to minister to those around me. I could see an out of the country mission trip in the near future. I remember enjoying (and being challenged) by the writing assignments that went along with reading John.

I feel called to make a difference – as much and whatever difference I can make in the world. The orientation and the experiences gave me a clearer picture of my place – some things that I can do – including regular prayer but not limited to prayer – also including humanly possible acts.

I believe that the haves should help/serve the have nots. It also shows the haves how much they have been blessed.

More compassionate, feel and see others suffering, try to be helpful, more submissive to God's will than before as I grow.

I feel we are all called to mission (whether domestically or overseas). Before orientation I felt all missions were to those far away; however all of those hurting are not in another country.

My call at this point is to encourage as much as I can others to participate in short-term missions. I have experienced in myself and witnessed in others the strengthening of my relationship to God and in my fellowship with others. (It was hard to separate the results of these questions as to whether it was due to the orientation or the trip itself or more like the trip success was due to intense orientation.)

Blessed with the responsibility and ability to help others. My limited help provides hope to those in need and just as important keeps me grateful for what I have – counters to

drive to buy and possess more and more. (Other comments) Much more appreciative of the gifts (possessions) I have been given.

I feel like I needed to give back because I had been so fortunate. The fact that we were working with children made me feel even a stronger calling. I think I saw the notice for it because God wanted me to.

For people new to mission work, these are vital meetings. More reading background should be done as the establishment of specific mission – i.e. work of previous missionaries – understanding culture most desirable before immersion.

The mission trips have had a cumulative effect on me. They have shown me that the church is truly worldwide and that we weren't taking Jesus to foreign countries. He was there waiting for us in addition to traveling with us. Over the years I worked a lot of painting and construction projects which I think bettered the world but I also learned that relationships were more important than doing things the American way in other countries. I remember hearing how some missionaries had put tin roofs on some huts and it would have been better to use the native grass and thatch materials. I remember my first trip to Brazil and having some prayer groups with the Brazilians. At first I thought I was doing them a favor to join their group but quickly learned that my Brazilian prayer partners were way ahead of me spiritually. I still correspond by email 7 years after than initial trip and made two other trips to Brazil. I remember working with a lot of great people on the mission trips. One Sunday on a trip to Jamaica I mentioned to our minister... that I would miss church service that day. (She) said, "No, you won't...you're with me and the mission team." I had grown up very much with the concept that church was at 11:00 a.m. every Sunday in a building.

I plan to be a doctor and do mission work as a major part of my job, traveling to people in need. After seeing how hard some people have it, I have realized the importance of utilizing resources. I have the ability to help people, therefore I will.

I feel that the whole purpose of my life is to serve others. Although I felt that way somewhat before the mission trip, the feeling is even stronger now to me, part of the definition of eternal life is that our commitment and words in everyday life have lasting effects on others.

I realize that mission (short term) is a gift provided that one is fully prepared. Saturation in the culture, provided in orientation, gave me a wider perspective of "we are all God's children." I pray I am able to continue what God has so wonderfully provided. By reaching out to others in need, I feel good about where I am in life.



## APPENDIX C

A PROGRAM OF ORIENTATION  
WITH DISCIPLING ELEMENTS  
FOR SHORT-TERM MISSION TEAMS

**GROWING AS DISCIPLES; GROWING IN MISSION**  
**A Course of Discipleship for Short-Term Mission Groups**  
*Beth Lindquist McCaw*

You are about to embark on a journey in mission. You and the rest of your mission team no doubt have many hopes, fears, questions and expectations at this exciting moment. As you prepare to go, do you wonder what you really need to know as a short-term missionary? Key phrases in a foreign language? The lightest way to pack a suitcase? How to use hand tools? How to purify water and stay hydrated? The statistics regarding the city or country in which you will be ministering? All of these may be important in your mission work. However, the most important knowledge for you to have – first and last on the list – is Jesus. As you will discover in your study over the next months, it is Jesus who has called you to himself as his disciple, it is Jesus who is sending you in mission, it is Jesus’ good news you are sharing, it is Jesus’ kingdom you are demonstrating, it is Jesus’ power that accomplishes anything good that happens when people engage in mission.

Attempting service without Christ at the center is disappointing for you, for those with whom you serve, and for God. At worst you might burden rather than empower, offend through condescension, demonstrate consumerism, jeopardize the ministries of your hosts, pursue self-interest under the banner and in the budget for “God’s mission.” At best you might have a harmless adventure, some fascinating tourist travels, a feel-good humanitarian experience, an educational cultural exchange, or an intense experience of personal growth. However, with Jesus at the center of your life and your mission, you will be doing nothing less than answering your reason for living, enjoying communion with God, participating in the coming of God’s kingdom, sharing news that gives life now and forever, worshiping and glorifying the God of the universe! The apostle Paul, a rather famous missionary, wrote this about the heart of his ministry and mission and message:

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God. (I Corinthians 2:1-5<sup>207</sup>)

And when Paul wrote to Timothy, a young person just getting started in the ministry, he described a most important kind of training necessary for the mission: “Train yourself in godliness, for, while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.” (I Timothy 4:7b-8)

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<sup>207</sup> The Scriptures quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and are used by permission. All rights reserved.

As part of your preparation for mission, you and your group will spend some time training as disciples. This means drawing close to Christ in love and learning, as individuals and as a group. Several spiritual exercises will be recommended to you to do this. Each day during your weeks of orientation you will have a passage of Scripture upon which to reflect. You will also take some time to pray, and to jot down the things you learn about God, about yourself, about the mission of God in which you are sharing. Each week's worth of readings has a particular discipline as a theme to help you grow to know Christ better, and to grow your spirit into a Christlike shape for mission. At the end of every week, you will reflect in your group on Scripture together, and discuss how God is forming you as disciples and as missionaries. As a group you will also pray together and practice other disciplines in your preparation. There are suggestions for group activities that will help build you and the short-term mission that you and your congregation have planned. As you get ready to begin with "Day One," here are some instructions that will be helpful in regard to prayer, spiritual reading, and journaling.

Prayer is a way that we experience communion with God, as well as a way that we participate in the work of God. So often we think that prayer is talking to God, or even sending messages to God, when an essential part of prayer is listening. We cannot really be disciples or missionaries well without enjoying and working at prayer. If we are committing ourselves to God's mission, we must begin by looking to him and listening to him. "The daily discipline of listening and responding to meaning is called obedience. ...I must give my ear, give myself, so fully to the word that reaches me that it will send me. Being sent by the word, I will be obedient to my mission."<sup>208</sup>

How can we listen for God? Sometimes it may seem that God is invisible and silent these days. However, we discover that God is present and speaking when we learn how to look and listen. God has taken great care to reveal himself to us many ways. Three places in which we may begin listening include nature – or creation, the Bible, and Jesus. Creation is an expression of God, and a beloved possession of God. We can listen to God by viewing a sunrise, taking in a starry night, studying an ant at work, watching for the change of seasons. What do you learn about God when you notice his handiwork? What do you hear? One thing we should not fail to hear is God's great love for the world. The detail of a snowflake, the interdependency of ecosystems, the wild variety of creatures, the vastness of the sky, the complexity of the human body, the wonder of human communities, the abundance of colors and textures – we are part of a world created with love. As you devote yourself to mission, take time to study the world that "God so loved...that he gave his only begotten son..."

There is another special way that God has revealed himself to us - Jesus. When Philip asked that Jesus show him and the other disciples the Father, Jesus said, "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." (John 14:9a) The apostle Paul described that "God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in (Christ)..." (Colossians 1:19) Though we do not have Jesus physically present with us, we are able to know him through the Bible, and by the presence of the Holy Spirit in us, in the community of faith, and at work in the world. To listen to God is to let Jesus' words and life speak to us.

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<sup>208</sup> David Steindler-Rast, *A Listening Heart* (New York: Crossroad, 1994), 10-11.

The gift of God's revelation in the Bible is a great treasure to God's people – it becomes a point of reference with great authority for us, one which we can trust in order to know God and God's will. There are times when we read Scripture for information, and study it in order to interpret it. Your group will likely study the Bible in this way. However, there are also times when we open the Bible with a primary motive to listen. This type of contemplative reading (*lectio divina*, “spiritual reading”) is a time when we are receiving rather than doing. You are encouraged to read with this kind of open heart each day as you prepare for mission.

For each scripture that is provided, try this exercise: As you open your Bible, take time to pray, to calm your mind and heart, to set aside the distractions of the day. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you through the Word. Then read through a verse, or several verses, or the entire passage provided, several times, allowing opportunity for meditation between each reading. Some people find it helpful to read aloud and “hear” the words in a fresh way, or use different Bible translations. After the first two or three readings, note a word or phrase God impresses upon your heart from that passage. *Write that word or phrase down in your workbook* and meditate upon it. Use your imagination – you might envision a story, or there might be an image or impression that comes to mind with the word or phrase and then sticks with you. Then read the passage again. In your workbook, *finish this sentence: “In this scripture I sense...”* After you describe the things you have prayerfully sensed in reading the passage, read it one more time, this time listening for an invitation from God. In your workbook, you will answer: *“What is God saying to me here?”* Your answer to that question might be a prayer for God to be at work in and through you in the ways you have discerned. Listen to the Holy Spirit as you consider what application or invitation is present in this portion of the Word for you. Spend time in prayer to receive this Word, and then spend time in silence with God. If you are not sure where to start with this kind of Bible reading, go to the Psalms. The Psalms are a wonderful collection of prayers – honest conversations between God and people very much like you.

Prayer is listening and contemplative, but prayer is also the work of mission. Your prayer life throughout your mission will include this kind of work. Intercessory prayer is a more familiar form for many people. You might already have a list of “prayer requests” or people or ministries for whom you pray regularly. An important aspect of intercessory prayer is to learn to pray for God's will and work to be done. To pray this way is the prayerful work of mission. A familiar way in which you participate in God's mission through prayer is represented in the Lord's prayer: “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” To pray that line is not to give God permission to get his work done. To pray it is an appeal that God bring about the completion of his good will; it is also an act of throwing your lot in with God's - that by your prayers and the whole of your being, you are with God in realizing the fullness of his kingdom here on earth, just as it is in heaven. It is a powerful line to pray – at the same time you are laying down your will, exalting God's, and committing yourself to God's kingdom on earth. It is a prayer of participation in mission. It is the foundation for all of the other prayers of intercession you will offer in your mission.

One useful means of prayer and reflection is writing. In addition to answering the three questions for *lectio divina* in your workbook, you are encouraged to journal

throughout your orientation and throughout your mission. If you have never kept a journal, you may wonder what is involved. The root of the word “journal” speaks of the day (soup du jour!); “journals” were originally logs of the day’s transactions. Today the word commonly refers to a place to record events, and also to reflect upon them, explore meaning, discern patterns in our lives, dialogue with an imaginary correspondent or pray to God. Doing these with the aid of paper and pen (or laptop) is “journaling.” In terms of our spiritual life, Richard Peace explains,

“Journaling helps us pay attention to God. It is a way of hearing and responding to God. Journaling helps us understand our unfolding story. Knowing our story helps us to see what God has been doing in the past, is doing now, and is calling us to do in the future.”<sup>209</sup>

Journaling can be an invaluable tool in helping you prepare for and engage in mission. It can help you:

- Understand your own experience of the God whom you seek to share
- Clarify God’s call in your life and in this experience
- Sift through motives, hopes, and fears for your ministry
- Identify areas of strength and needs for growth
- Maintain your focus on, and conversation with, God
- Be thoughtful and prayerful rather than reactive in new contexts
- Reflect upon new relationships and unique - and sometimes intense - experiences in a way that grows you

Your journal is for conversation with God and reflection before God – it is confidential. You may write prayers or letters, make lists of hopes and fears, compose a poem or a song, sketch a picture. Write freely as you wrestle and grow and delight in your relationship and mission with Christ.

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<sup>209</sup> Richard Peace, *Spiritual Journaling* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 1995), 5.

## Week One: WORSHIP

### Day One

The mission you are engaged in is all about the worship of God. John Piper explains, “Mission is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Mission exists because worship doesn’t... Worship is the fuel and the goal in missions.” He goes on to describe, “Mission is not the end-goal, it is moving us toward something – the worship of God by the whole world. Missions is not that goal. It is the means. And for that reason it is the second greatest human activity in the world.”<sup>210</sup> What is the first greatest human activity? Worshiping God. In mission, worshiping helps us remember why we are doing what we are doing. More than personal growth, even more than helping other people, mission is about praising God in Christ and declaring him Lord to the nations. When we take time to sing, to pray, to praise, to listen to God’s Word, to offer ourselves in adoration, we remember that we do this for God’s sake above all else. This week, take time to reflect on these Scriptures about worship and mission.

#### Psalm 67

May God be gracious to us and bless us  
and make his face to shine upon us,  
that your way may be known upon earth,  
your saving power among the nations.  
Let the peoples praise you, O God;  
let all the peoples praise you.

Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,  
for you judge the peoples with equity  
and guide the nations upon earth.  
Let the peoples praise you, O God;  
let all the peoples praise you.

The earth has yielded its increase;  
God, our God, has blessed us.  
May God continue to bless us;  
let all the ends of the earth revere him.

Reflection:

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<sup>210</sup> Piper, 11, 15.

**Week One: WORSHIP**  
**Day Two**

John 9:35-38

Jesus heard that they had driven him (the healed blind man) out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him.

What do you hear about belief and worship?

Reflection:

**Week One: WORSHIP**  
**Day Three**

Ephesians 1: 11-14

In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

What is it to “live for the praise of his glory?”

Reflection:



**Week One: WORSHIP**  
**Day Four**

Mark 12:28-34

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that (Jesus) answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is not other,’ and ‘to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor and oneself,’ – this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’ After that no one dared to ask him any question.

Reflection:

**Week One: WORSHIP**  
**Day Five**

Romans 12:1-2

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Reflection:

**Week One: WORSHIP**  
**Day Six**

Revelation 5:6-14

Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne. When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. They sing a new song: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and a people and a nation; you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God, and they will reign on earth.”

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, singing with full voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered  
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might  
and honor and glory and blessing!”

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing,

“To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb  
be blessing and honor and glory and might  
forever and ever!”

And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the elders fell down and worshiped.

Reflection:

**Week One: WORSHIP**  
**Day Seven**

Isaiah 66:18-23

For I know their works and their thoughts, and I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory, and I will set a sign among them. From them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Put, and Lud – which draw the bow – to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations. They shall bring all your kindred from all the nations as an offering to the Lord, on horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and on mules, and on dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the Lord, just as the Israelites bring a grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the Lord. And I will also take some of them as priests and as Levites, says the Lord.

For as the new heavens and the new earth,  
which I will make,  
shall remain before me, says the Lord,  
so shall your descendants and your name remain.  
From new moon to new moon,  
and from sabbath to sabbath,  
all flesh shall come to worship before me,  
says the Lord. (18-23)

Reflection:

## **Week One: WORSHIP**

### **Activities for Practicing Worship**

1. Study a worship service

Take a bulletin from a service of worship in your congregation. Study each element as a group to see where the loving mission of God is reflected in the service. How are announcements, sharing the peace, proclaiming the Word, celebrating the sacraments, receiving the charge and benediction related to mission?

2. Lead a worship service

Plan or assist with a service of worship in your congregation to be held before or after your mission. Work with your pastor and other people in the congregation to glorify God together.

3. Be commissioned

Ask your pastor to include a service of commissioning for your team as a part of a congregational worship service before you leave. In that commissioning, both the team and the congregation can pledge to pray for one another and for the mission to glorify God and bless those whom you are sent to serve.

4. Plan worship for the mission

Prepare now for times of worship to celebrate on your field of service. Different portions or worship, or days of the trip, can be divided among team members. At the least plan a time of Scripture reading, meditation, prayer and song as a team each day. Better yet, find out if there will be opportunity to worship so with your hosts or those among whom you will be ministering.

5. Sing God's praises

Select several songs that praise God's glory and sing them together before God; be prepared to share these songs during the mission should opportunity arise. Choose songs that glorify God, are easy to sing, and perhaps are easy to teach. Consider putting together a song book for the trip.

6. Daily worship

Go back and look at the reading of Romans 12. If this chapter had not been included during a week of "worship," would you have thought of "presenting your bodies as living sacrifices" as a way of worshiping God? Name some ways that you can be newly conscious of worshiping God this week.

**Week Two: VOCATION**  
**Day One**

“Vocation” comes from the Latin word *vocare* – to call. Long before you applied to be part of a mission team, God called you in Jesus. Why has God called you to Christ? Because you have been created for fellowship with God and for life in God’s kingdom. God has claimed you in Christ – your baptism is a sign of this. As a child of God and a citizen of the kingdom it is your joy to call Jesus “Lord” - and to call the rest of the world to say with you, “Jesus is Lord!” That’s the mission part! This week, study these Scripture texts to learn more about your calling – your God-given purpose in life.

Luke 5:29-32

Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house; and there was large crowd of tax collectors and others sitting at the table with them. The Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” Jesus answered, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance.”

Reflection:

**Week Two: VOCATION**  
**Day Two**

Ephesians 1:3-10

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and on earth.

Reflection:

**Week Two: VOCATION**  
**Day Three**

Romans 14:7-8

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

*and...*

Romans 7:4

In the same way, my friends, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God.

Reflection:



**Week Two: VOCATION**  
**Day Four**

I Peter 2:4-9

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture:

See, I am laying in Zion a stone,  
a cornerstone chosen and precious;  
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe,  
"The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the very head of the corner."

And

"A stone that makes the stumble,  
and a rock that makes them fall."

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Reflection:

**Week Two: VOCATION**  
**Day Five**

Genesis 12:1-3

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

Reflection:

**Week Two: VOCATION**  
**Day Six**

Matthew 4:18-22

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea – for they were fishermen. And he said to them, (“Come,”) “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

*and...*

Matthew 28:16-20

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Reflection:

**Week Two: VOCATION**  
**Day Seven**

2 Corinthians 5:14-21

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Reflection:

## Week Two: VOCATION

### Activities for Exploring Call

#### 1. Study your baptism

If you have any mementos from your baptism, bring them to your group meeting. At the meeting, pass out copies of the liturgy for baptism from your church's tradition. Study the prayers and the promises and readings. Discuss how the mission you are undertaking is related to those prayers and promises and scriptures.

#### 2. Write a mission statement

Mons A. Teig describes that being baptized is for life. If someone says, "I was married," it would be natural to assume that they are now divorced or widowed. Rather, a married person says, "I am married." So, also, though we may say, "I *was* baptized," the truth is "I *am* baptized – this is who I am each day of my life."<sup>211</sup> Think about this mark of baptism that stays with you by the Holy Spirit, saying whose you are and why you are every day. Take time to write a personal statement of purpose or mission. Share these in your group.

#### 3. Take a Lordship inventory

To call Jesus "Lord" is to trust him with every area of your life. It is also to recognize Jesus' authority in every area of your life. Take a few minutes as individuals and write down those areas of life that are easiest, and those areas that are hardest, in which to "trust and obey." Discuss as a group where the joyful and challenging places are in discipleship. Pray to recommit the whole of your lives to Christ, and pray for one another as you grow in faithfulness.

#### 4. Count your blessings

Like Abraham was, you are "Blessed to be a blessing." List the blessings that God has given you throughout your life that stand out most to you. Why do you count each of these a blessing? How might God bring fruit from these to bless *other* people through you? Write these down and share them in your group. Share with one another the blessings you have received from each other.

#### 5. Study the saints

Tell your group about a Christian who has been very influential in your life in teaching you what it is to love and follow Jesus.

#### 6. Read a missionary biography

Have each member of the group read the biography of a missionary. You may have many different biographies represented. Report back to the group about the person you studied and describe what you learned of vocation by his or her life's witness.

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<sup>211</sup> Mons A. Teig in Schattaauer, 53.

### Week Three: PRAYER Day One

To be in relationship with Jesus is to pray. Praying is to listen and talk to God. Praying is to be in communion with God. Praying is to following Jesus' own example. Praying is to learn Jesus' teaching on prayer. Praying is to follow Jesus' instructions, and to join Jesus' work, by praying for the mission and kingdom of God. Throughout your orientation and mission you will be engaged in prayer alone and in prayer with your team, as well as with those with and to whom you will minister. Listen to God calling you to prayer this week in these passages.

#### Luke 11:1-13

He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." He said to them, "When you pray, say,

Father, hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come.  
Give us each day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our sins,  
For we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.  
And do not bring us to the time of trial."

And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.' And he answered from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

"So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Reflection:

**Week Three: PRAYER**  
**Day Two**

Matthew 9:35 – 38

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

Reflection:

**Week Three: PRAYER**  
**Day Three**

Luke 18:1-8

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and to not lose heart. He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Grant me justice against my opponent.’ For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, ‘Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.’” And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”



**Week Three: PRAYER**  
**Day Four**

Matthew 6:5-13

And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Reflection:

**Week Three: PRAYER**  
**Day Five**

Excerpts from some of the apostle Paul's letters to Christians:

Colossians 4:12-13

Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you. He is always wrestling in prayer on your behalf, so that you may stand mature and fully assured in everything that God wills.

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

To this end we always pray for you, asking that our God will make you worthy of his call and will fulfill by his power every good resolve and work of faith, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 3: 14-19

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 6:18-20

Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

Reflection:

**Week Three: PRAYER**  
**Day Six**

Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Reflection:

**Week Three: Prayer**  
**Day Seven**

Romans 8:26-27

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Reflection:

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### Week Three: PRAYER

#### Activities for Practicing Prayer

##### 1. Take time with God

As an individual, determine a time during each day in which you will set aside other activities in order to pray. It may be helpful to find a special space in which to pray free from distractions and without worrying about being overheard if you speak aloud: use a basement study; close the door to your office at work; find a bench at the park; drop into a chapel. Set aside the time to listen, to meditate, to pray. As a team, if you have not already done so, set aside a protected amount of time in your group meetings for prayer.

##### 2. Be still before God

Spend an extended period of time in silence – 15 or 30 minutes. If it will help you to focus, choose an image from Scripture on which to reflect – such as the Good Shepherd. Or you may want to practice a “breath prayer” in which you choose a simple phrase, often from Scripture, and repeat it over and over in time with your breathing. The *Jesus prayer* is one example: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

##### 3. Collect some favorite prayers

Many prayers are provided for our use in Scripture, beginning with the Lord’s Prayer and including a whole prayer book in the Psalms. Skim through these and copy down several of your favorites. You may also want to look through collections of prayers from saints throughout church history and add those to your collection. Your church tradition may have a book for worship that includes prayers. Pray your favorites as is fitting with your group. These can be useful to use if you are not used to praying aloud.

##### 4. Pray through the newspaper

Have each team member cut out an article from a newspaper or news magazine describing need in the world and bring it to your next meeting. Take time to pray for each of these as you are together.

##### 5. Pray for the people with for whom you will serve

Contact the people with whom you will serve and ask them how you as a team and a congregation may be praying specifically for them. Begin this prayer list and publicize it for the congregation.

##### 6. Use prayer guides as a team

There are many useful prayer guides to mission. Your church denomination may publish one. There are prayer guides available as daily e-mail such as the Global Prayer Digest online: [GPDMOD@wciu.edu](mailto:GPDMOD@wciu.edu). There are printed prayer guides as well. Patrick Johnstone’s *Operation World* is one of the most thorough, and features facts and prayer needs for specific countries.

##### 7. Organize a program of prayer in your congregation

Plan a way for the entire church to join you in prayer as part of this mission. You may hold a service of prayer, create a prayer group to meet on a certain morning, or publish a daily guide to specific prayer needs for use in the days before, during, and after the mission. Some churches set up schedules of continuous prayer for the time the mission team is serving on the field.

8. Designate prayer partners

Match up team members to pray for and with each other throughout the mission. If some team members are not used to praying aloud, this can be a comfortable place to start, offering simple prayers: “God bless...” “God please care for....” There may be opportunities to pray with others, or in worship, during your mission, and this is a good time to learn how to prayer together.

**Week Four: KINGDOM CONSCIOUSNESS**  
**Day One**

Did you know that in his mission, Jesus has spoken about the kingdom of God as the gospel? For Jesus, the gospel was the good news that in him, the kingdom had arrived. As he called people to himself, he was (and is) calling people to life in that kingdom. The kingdom is not a place, it is not “Christendom,” and it is not the church. Rather the kingdom is all that reflects the reign of God. The kingdom of God is something we enjoy now because Christ has died, risen from the grave, and is reigning in heaven. However, the kingdom is also something still on the way; it will be realized fully on that day when Christ’s victory is known in completeness throughout all creation and “every knee shall bow and tongue confess that Jesus is Lord.” The kingdom is now – and not yet. Sharing in Christ’s mission is sharing the good news that the kingdom has arrived, and demonstrating the Lord’s good reign by our words and deeds. This week, grow your awareness of the kingdom of Christ so that you might more fully live and share the good news.

Mark 1:15

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said, “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Reflection:

**Week Four: KINGDOM CONSCIOUSNESS**  
**Day Two**

Matthew 9:35

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness.

*And...*

Matthew 10:7-8

When Jesus sent out the twelve disciples, he said to them, in part, “As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.”

Reflection:



**Week Four: KINGDOM CONSCIOUSNESS**  
**Day Three**

Matthew 6:9-13

This, then, is how you should pray:

Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be your name,  
Your kingdom come,  
Your will be done  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our debts,  
As we have forgiven our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from the evil one.

Reflection:

**Week Four: KINGDOM CONSCIOUSNESS**  
**Day Four**

Luke 4:16-21

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives,  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
To proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

*And...*

Luke 4:42-44

At daybreak he departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowds were looking for him; and when they reached him, they wanted to prevent him from leaving them. But he said to them, “I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose.” So he continued proclaiming the message in the synagogues of Judea.

*And...*

Luke 17:20-21

Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, “The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed, nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ For in fact, the kingdom of God is among you.”

Reflection:

**Week Four: KINGDOM CONSCIOUSNESS**  
**Day Five**

John 3:1-21 (NIV)

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

In reply, Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”

“How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born.”

Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

“How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

“You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven – the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.”

Reflection:

**Week Four: KINGDOM CONSCIOUSNESS**  
**Day Six**

Matthew 13:31

He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches.” He told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

*And...*

Matthew 13:44-46

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

Reflection:

**Week Four: KINGDOM CONSCIOUSNESS**  
**Day Seven**

Matthew 6:31-33

So do not worry, saying “What shall we drink?” or ”What shall we wear?” For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly father knows you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Reflection:

## **Week Four: KINGDOM CONSCIOUSNESS**

### **Activities for Pointing to the Kingdom of God**

#### 1. Notice the Kingdom

Discuss together your growing understanding of the kingdom of God. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, an evil and oppressive reign of winter is overcome, and in the process signs of new and green life begin appearing. Creatures say in hope to one another of the Christ figure, “Aslan is on the move!” What signs do we see that God in Christ is on the move bringing his kingdom in fullness? Brainstorm a list of those signs. Begin with Jesus’ life and resurrection and include God’s activity in the world today.

#### 2. Notice God’s reign in your own life

In which part of your life are you experiencing God’s reign? What difference has this made in your experience and service?

In which part of your life are you yet to acknowledge God’s reign? Remember that Jesus’ call to the kingdom was a call to repentance – to turn away from sin and toward a new life. Pray for one another that you may grow in obedience and hope as citizens of God’s kingdom.

#### 3. Do a hope check

Consider as a team what makes you hopeful that the ills and evils present in the world will be overcome by Christ. What can you do to keep this kind of hope before you as you go in mission?

#### 4. Align your mission with the coming kingdom of God

If God’s reign in Christ were seen in completeness, list those things that would be overcome or made new in our world:

Are any of these part of your mission as a team and as a congregation? Are you called to address some of them – in your mission trip, and in your service as a church – in order to demonstrate that God’s kingdom has come in Christ? Talk to your partner hosts in mission and ask what signs of God’s kingdom are present in their ministry, and for what they are praying yet to come.

#### 5. Point to the kingdom

What is one thing you can say, do, or be this week that will let someone else know that God is present and active, and that his kingdom is coming? How will they know that Jesus has brought good news to the poor, proclaimed freedom for prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, release for the oppressed? How will they see or know, through you, that this is “the year of the Lord’s favor?” (Luke 4:18-19)

#### 6. Describe kingdom life

Discuss: What is the difference between telling someone about the kingdom and telling someone about church? You may have had opportunity to tell people about church, or about your congregation. Now describe to one another what it is like to be part of the kingdom of God.

## Week Five: BEARING WITNESS

### Day One

To what do we bear witness by our actions and words? Last week, we learned that the kingdom of God and the church are not the same thing. Jesus did not call people to receive the church, but rather the kingdom represented in himself. Often when we “share about our faith,” or “tell our faith journey,” it is a story about the church. But in mission, we have news to tell that is about much more than a congregation, denomination, or even the church worldwide. Our good news is Jesus. Jesus’ commissioned the church to make disciples – disciples for himself. In your mission team you will share stories about how you have been spiritually formed by members of your families, and members of your congregation. However, as you go out in mission, it is also important to dig behind those stories - and beneath them and beyond them - and be able to describe the Christ to whom you were and are drawn, who is our Savior, our Lord, and who offers life to the world.

Our witness is not compelling others to believe or judging them, but calling others to new life in Christ by confessing – telling - what we believe, what we know, what we have experienced about Christ. We bear witness by what we do and by what we say. Week two we learned that Christians are “God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” For many of us, talking about matters of faith is new and challenging. And yet we are taught to “be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.” (I Peter 3:15-16). The life of faith is very personal, but also very public – God loves the whole world, and wants the world to know it! This week listen to Scripture and think about how your life can bear witness of Christ to a world thirsty to know God.

#### Psalms 89:1-2

I will sing of your steadfast love, O LORD, for ever;  
with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.  
I declare that your steadfast love is established for ever;  
your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.

#### Psalms 57: 9-11

I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples;  
I will sing praises to you among the nations.  
For your steadfast love is as high as the heavens;  
your faithfulness extends to the clouds.  
Be exalted, O God, above the heavens.  
Let your glory be over all the earth.

Reflection:



**Week Five: BEARING WITNESS**  
**Day Two**

I Corinthians 15:3-5

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

Luke 23:33-47

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" Then the soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last. When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent."

Reflection:

**Week Five: BEARING WITNESS**  
**Day Three**

Luke 24:36-49

While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.

He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

Reflection:

**Week Five: BEARING WITNESS**  
**Day Four**

John 1:10-14

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Romans 5:6-11

For while we were still weak, and the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person – though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Reflection:

**Week Six: BEARING WITNESS**  
**Day Five**

Luke 8:38-39

The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

*and...*

I Peter 3:14-16

But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.

Reflection:

**Week Five: BEARING WITNESS**  
**Day Six**

Matthew 5:13-16

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Reflection:

**Week Five: BEARING WITNESS**  
**Day Seven**

John 17:18-26

(Jesus praying for his disciples)

As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

“I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

“Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

Reflection:

## Week Five: BEARING WITNESS

### Activities for Practicing Witness

#### 1. Practicing telling about your experiences

Each member recall a time when something wonderful happened and you could hardly wait to tell someone about it. Describe these experiences to the rest of your group. Then discuss what it is like to share, and to hear, such stories.

#### 2. Reflect on your experience of the gospel

Choose one of these questions and write in your journal:

- Why Easter so special to you and to the world?
- What is so “good” about the “good news?”
- “Unpack” (explain) this line from a favorite Christmas hymn, *O Little Town of Bethlehem*: “The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.”
- Read the parables about “the lost” in Luke 15 (for example the prodigal son Luke 15:11-32) as parables illustrating God’s love and grace and joy in our salvation. In groups of three, describe where you most see yourself in one of these parables, and why.

Then, write out your story about coming home to God, about receiving Christ, about placing your faith in Jesus. Read this story to someone else. Then tell this story to your group next week or at a time that your leader instructs. Pray for one another in learning to share good news with joy and by God’s power. Save the story you have written to share on your mission trip should there be opportunity.

#### 3. Distinguish the gospel from other news

When we want to help others, and when we are confronted with need, there may be many things we want to share that reflect our culture or personal values more than the gospel of Christ. Brainstorm as a group using a white board or chalkboard. Questions that might help: What do I most want people to know, experience, or have? Why? What does God most want people to know, experience, have? Why? Use the scripture readings studied thus far as points of reference. How closely does the good news you want to minister and share line up with Jesus’ gospel? What are some of the messages that we might be most likely to confuse with the gospel in mission?

#### 5. Examine your life together

Read John Acts 4:32-35. Look at how your team functions together, or how your congregations shares life together. As a group, make two lists: What in your relationships dishonors God and distracts people from his gospel? What in your

relationships glorifies God and points people to him? As a group, write a prayer together asking God to continue to grow your life together in a God-ward way.

6. Examine the witness of your life

The word “martyr” is related to the word witness. We are martyrs for Christ – the whole substance of our lives is to bear witness to him. Consider the witness of your life. Would you put a bumper sticker on your car, or wear a shirt that said, “I am a Christian”? If you have, or would, present yourself so clearly that way, what would the world then have a right to expect from you? As you identify yourself as a Christian, as you step forward as a missionary, what does the world have a right to expect from you? None of us are perfect, and yet we take risks when we state clearly our identity and purpose to the world. As we do call for the world’s attention, how can we avoid saying “Be like me!” and instead say, “Let’s follow Jesus together!”?<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> cf. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 376.



## Week Six: DEPENDENCY

### Day One

Dependency? This may seem an odd discipline for a mission team – after all, aren't you going to help others? The surprising and paradoxical dynamic when participating in God's mission is that missionaries are most effective when they are most dependent. The mission is in God's control – it belongs to Christ, not to any church or any team. This can be hard for humans inclined to be "control freaks" to understand, but it is very important. Mission is powerful not because of our wisdom or strength or resources or even our love; it is powerful because of Christ's Spirit at work. As you go in mission, one of the most important things you can learn is to turn to God in dependency. You will lean on Jesus, on the Holy Spirit, on the body of Christ in the form of your teammates and your partner hosts. The good news is that we do not have to be afraid or filled with despair when we discover we are weak. God has planned on using weak and dependent human beings so that his power and glory can shine through in mission!

#### Matthew 28:18-20

"All authority on heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Reflection:

**Week Six: DEPENDENCY**  
**Day Two**

1. 2 Corinthians 4:5-10

For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Christ.

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

Reflection:

**Week Six: DEPENDENCY**  
**Day Three**

Acts 1:1-9

After (Jesus') suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

*And...*

Acts 2:1-4 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Reflection:

**Week Six: DEPENDENCY**  
**Day Four**

Acts 4:5-13

(Peter and John were arrested after healing a crippled man and preaching Jesus:)

The next day their rulers, elders and scribes assembled in Jerusalem with Annas, the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. This Jesus is

‘the stone that was rejected by you, the builders;  
it has become the cornerstone.’

There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.”

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized them as companions of Jesus.

Reflection:

**Week Six: DEPENDENCY**  
**Day Five**

John 6:65

And (Jesus) said, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.”

*and...*

I Corinthians 3:5-9

What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to both. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. For we are God’s servants, working together; you are God’s field, God’s building.

**Week Six: DEPENDENCY**  
**Day Six**

Matthew 6:25-45

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And you do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you – you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and these things will be given to you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today. (Matthew 6:25-34)

*and...*

Matthew 7:7-11

Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

Reflection:

**Week Six: DEPENDENCY**  
**Day Seven**

I Corinthians 1:26-31

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters; not many were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

*and...*

II Corinthians 12:7-10

Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

## **Week Six: DEPENDENCY**

### **Activities to Practice Dependency**

#### **1. Recognize your needs**

List everything and everyone upon whom you have been dependent since waking up this morning (don't forget the "small" things we take for granted; to what do you owe waking up at all?). Share your lists around the circle.

#### **2. Control freaks: confess!**

Share around in your group: What are the things beyond your control? What is really within your control? Discuss together: Why do we try so hard to control things? How can we encourage one another to give up control? Pray with hands open and facing up as you turn over your lives and the mission to God.

#### **3. Identify your fears**

As a group, make a list of fears about the mission. Discuss how these fears call you to depend upon God and exercise faith. Pray with one another that in faith you will turn your fears over to God and trust the Holy Spirit for the mission.

#### **4. Lean on each other**

As a group, do one of these two exercises:

- A trust walk: Blindfold half of the group, and pair seeing members with blind members. Have the seeing members lead the blind members around for five minutes. Switch roles. As a group afterward, discuss what it is to depend upon each other.
- A trust fall: Make a circle as a group, standing shoulder to shoulder. One by one have a member stand in the middle, close his or her eyes, and the fall freely (the group ought to catch him/her!). As a group afterward, discuss what it is to depend on each other.

Conclude your discussion by describing the ways you depend upon each other now, and the ways you will need to depend upon each other in mission. Consider as well how you are dependent upon your congregation and the wider church in life and in mission.

#### **5. Be prepared to lean on your partner hosts**

Consider those who will receive you in mission. In what ways can you imagine even now that you will receive ministry from them? Brainstorm a list of ways in which you are and will be dependent upon them – write these on a board. Discuss and pray together about growing in grace to learn and receive from others.

#### **6. Turn to your partner hosts in dependency**

Be in contact now with those who will host and partner with you. Listen to their definition and goals for the mission. Ask what you need to receive from them even



before you leave in order to be effective. Do they have suggestions or directions for preparation?

## Week Seven: KINSHIP

### Day One

Throughout this guide, we have talked about “teammates” and “congregation” and “partners” and “hosts.” In fact, the relationship you have with everyone involved in this mission runs much deeper than any of those terms expresses: in Christ you are spiritual relatives, or kin, with every Christian. One way this relationship is described in the Bible is a body – there are many parts joined in living relationship to make a whole. This relationship is a profound one that comes with your baptism into Christ, and it is made possible because of the Holy Spirit in and among you. Kinship is not a matter of choice – it is spiritually granted to you as part of your birthright. This kind of unity demands and empowers a particular kind of community and ministry. Discipleship and mission are lived out of relationship to Christ and in relationship with the body of Christ. Furthermore, the kind of relational ministry that Christ has modeled for us is incarnational. God did not stand far off in his mission to us, but has come as “Emmanuel” – “God with us” to abide with us and draw us to himself. This week, reflect on what it means to live and serve in close relationship with Christ, other Christians, and those to whom God has sent you.

#### John 15:1-17

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be complete in you, and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call your servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

Reflection:

**Week Seven: KINSHIP**  
**Day Two**

Philippians 2:1-11

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,  
but made himself nothing,  
taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
and became obedient to death –  
even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,  
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

Reflection:

**Week Seven: KINSHIP**  
**Day Three**

Ephesians 4:1-16

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope, when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says,

When he ascended on high,  
He led captives in his train  
And gave gifts to men.”

“(What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was he who gave some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Reflection:

**Week Seven: KINSHIP**  
**Day Four**

Romans 12:3-21

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members of one another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Reflection:

**Week Seven: KINSHIP**  
**Day Five**

Luke 10:25-37

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.”

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, pass by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.’ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

Reflection:

**Week Seven: KINSHIP****Day Six**

Mark 3:31-35 Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside asking for you.” And he replied, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” And looking at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”

Reflection:

**Week Seven: KINSHIP**  
**Day Seven**

Ephesians 5:21

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Reflection:



**Week Seven: KINSHIP**  
**Activities for Practicing Kinship**

1. Examine Your Culture and Worldview

We cannot shed our cultural identities, but we can become more aware of them and be thoughtful regarding how they influence our views and behaviors. Take some time to answer “true” or “false” to each of the statements below, and write a sentence answering “why?” for each one. When everyone is finished, discuss your answers.

- My own experience is the most reliable truth I know.
- Democracy is the best form of government.
- Ideally, men should be the breadwinners in a family.
- Christians should not smoke.
- There is nothing wrong with drinking alcohol in moderation.
- Children should be seen and not heard.
- It is wrong to use the pulpit to address political issues.
- It is indecent to have one's breasts exposed in public.
- It is indecent to have one's midriff exposed in public.
- The most important time is now.
- It is better to eat food with utensils than with your hands.
- Children should not have to hold jobs.
- It is good manners to take your shoes off when entering someone's house.
- Indoor running water is essential for a good quality of life.
- Religion is a private issue.
- Capitalism is essential for the prosperity of a society.
- Capitalism is a hindrance to a compassionate society.

- It is appropriate to announce in church how much each worshiper has given to the offering.

- Individual rights take precedent over community rights.

- Through hard work, anyone can have a middle class lifestyle.

Discuss together: What makes a congregation of the church a “real” church?

## 2. Prepare for Crossing Cultures

Are you ready to enter into another culture as a receptive student? Cross cultural games are fun ways to discover some of your cultural biases gain cultural flexibility. Use a game like BaFaBaFa<sup>213</sup> or another<sup>214</sup> with your team. Invite members of your congregation, or a particular group such as the missions committee or youth group, to participate in and help run the game.

## 3. Make Plans for an Incarnational Lifestyle

Be ready to identify with those among whom you will serve as closely as possible without inconveniencing them. Consider:

- Where will you stay? What kind of housing will you stay in? Will it encourage and enable you to be “in the world” or “retreating from the world”? Follow the guidance of your host regarding what is appropriate, safe, and of greatest service and meaning to others.

- What will you wear? Research the place you will serve and find out what is practical for your service and culturally sensitive to the community. It is a small thing to give up shorts for two weeks for the cause of Christ and the blessing of those whom you serve. The same spirit will make you observant of guidelines on other behaviors as well, such as smoking, use of alcohol, dancing, or behavior between men and women.

- What will you eat? As a reflection of the communion meal, any experience of breaking bread together – table fellowship – is meaningful in any culture. Receive the hospitality offered by others with gratitude and recognition of spiritual service in the meal; eat as widely as good health practices will allow. You may make some discoveries that are delicious, but without doubt you will make some spiritual and relational discoveries.

## 4. Practice Yielding

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<sup>213</sup> Simulation Training Systems, P.O. Box 910, Del Mar, CA, 92014. Phone (800) 942-2900, (858) 755-0272.

<sup>214</sup> See Tim Dearborn, *Short-Term Missions Workbook* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2003), for a list of cross-cultural simulation games.

In your team, among your congregation, in your day to day life, practice the kind of deference to which this week's Scripture passages call you. When you gather again as a group, discuss these questions: What was the most difficult experience of submission you had this week, and why? What was the most rewarding experience of submission you had this week, and why?

#### 5. Write a Group Covenant

If you already have a group covenant, review it now with an eye for incarnational and relational mission. If you do not have a covenant, complete one together, including any input received from your host, and then have everyone sign it. Things to include:

- Ways that you intend to relate to one another as a team. Examples may include praying for each other, being helpful, deferring to one another.
- Ways that you intend to relate to those to whom and with whom you will serve. Consider attitudes and practices.
- Behavioral requirements needed for safe and effective ministry. Things such as abstaining from the use of alcohol, abiding by the host community's rules and customs, leaving electronics at home, or requiring minors to be in the company of an adult may be included here.
- Include in your covenant the plan should the covenant be broken. For example, some covenants prescribe a meeting with the leaders or the whole team; other teams may of necessity have a "zero-tolerance" policy and require an errant team member to return home as soon as can be arranged.

Plan your mission in close communication with those whom you will serve, or those with whom you will serve. Be in touch with them now to learn how they see your mission and how they need you to prepare.

#### 6 a. Consider how you will report on your trip

How do we speak of others once we have returned home? Reporting back is a great opportunity to share the mission with the wider church. However, there can be hazards. There is the temptation with an audience primed for exotic tales to describe people as we do the scenery. How would we want ourselves, our families, our homes, described by visitors in their home communities? This question is especially useful regarding information that is personal. Observe requests and needs for confidentiality both among your teammates and for your partner/hosts.

#### 6 b. Practice reporting on your trip

Divide into groups of three. Pretend that you are international visitors to your congregation from a sister church. Each group take 15 minutes to prepare a "minute-for-mission" that would describe to others what you experience and observe about one of these areas:

- The worship services
- The people who make up the membership
- The outreach or missions programs

After each group presents their minute-for-mission, the rest of the team members should answer these questions in the large group:

- How did it feel to hear someone else talk *about* you and your church?
- What about the presentation contributed to the feelings you have about being featured in a minute-for-mission?
- What will your goals be in sharing about the mission when you return home to your church?
- How can this sharing best glorify God and bless your receiver hosts as well as your home congregation?

#### 7. Plan for Ongoing Relationships and Projects

What are the hopes and expectations of your partner hosts for ongoing relationship? Be listening for those even now, and plan for relationship and mission beyond the trip. Share these hope with your congregation so that the entire body will be looking past the trip even before you leave. If there are projects to be supported in an ongoing fashion, learn of them from your partner/hosts rather than thinking independently.

Where you are unable to sustain relationships, be clear. For example, you might role play with one another responses to someone whose request for ongoing correspondence, or ongoing financial support, you cannot meet. In no case promise things during the mission that you will not maintain once you return to the commitments of your day-to-day life at home.

## Week Eight: SERVICE

### Day One

When you think of the word “service,” do service projects or service learning come to mind? Often when we are in “program” mode in the church, we think service is all about projects or events, such as that designated day when we go to serve meals at the homeless shelter. However, Jesus calls us to much more than projects in service – he calls us to a way of being. “Service,” as it is commonly thought of, is not the mission. Service bears witness to God in Christ – that is the mission. God is not sending you on your mission just to provide a church building or to supply food or to minister comfort and healing through medicine. God is sending you to bear witness to Him in such a way that others recognize and experience the good news of the gospel in Christ. This kind of radical lifestyle is heard in Jesus’ explanation of his own service: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mk 10:45) A life of service means dying to self so that we can find life in Christ and serve God and others freely. This dying to self means that there are things we give up in discipleship and mission. Jonathan Bonk writes of the demands of mission: “At the very least the incarnation means giving up the power, the prestige, the privilege, and the social position to which we feel naturally entitled. Christ’s mission done in Christ’s way must always begin, proceed, and end with the great renunciation.”<sup>215</sup> This week, study Jesus’ example and Jesus’ teaching about service, and consider how sharing in Christ’s baptism into death can help prepare you for life in mission.

#### John 20:19-22

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” After this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

*and...*

#### Mark 10:45

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Reflection:

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<sup>215</sup> Bonk, “Mission and the Problem of Affluence,” *Toward the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in Christian Mission*, 302.

**Week Eight: SERVICE**  
**Day Two**

Mark 10:35-45

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” And he said to them, “What is it you want me to do for you?” And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” They replied, “We are able.” Then Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”

When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. So Jesus called them and said to them, “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Reflection:

**Week Eight: Service  
Day Three**

Isaiah 53

Who has believed what we have heard?  
And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?  
For he grew up before him like a young plant,  
and like root out of dry ground;  
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,  
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.  
He was despised and rejected by others;  
a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;  
and as one from whom others hide their faces  
he was despised, and we held him of no account.

Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases;  
yet we accounted him stricken,  
struck down by God, and afflicted.  
But he was wounded for our transgressions,  
crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,  
and by his bruises we are healed.  
All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have all turned to our own way,  
and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,  
yet he did not open his mouth;  
Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,  
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,  
so he did not open his mouth.  
By a perversion of justice he was taken away.  
Who could have imagined his future?  
For he was cut off from the land of the living,  
stricken for the transgression of my people.  
They made his grave with the wicked  
and his tomb with the rich,  
Although he had done no violence,  
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain.  
When you make his life an offering for sin,  
he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days;

through him the will of the Lord shall prosper.  
Out of his anguish he shall see light;  
he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.  
The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous,  
and he shall bear their iniquities.  
Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,  
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;  
because he poured out himself to death,  
and was numbered with the transgressors;  
yet he bore the sin of many,  
and made intercession for the transgressors.

Reflection:



**Week Eight: SERVICE**  
**Day Four**

Matthew 10:37-39

Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Reflection:

**Week Eight: SERVICE**  
**Day Five**

John 13:1-17

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil have already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered him, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and head!" Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord – and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

Reflection:

**Week Eight: SERVICE**  
**Day Six**

Isaiah 58:6-14

Is not this the fast that I choose:  
to loose the bonds of injustice,  
to undo the thongs of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?  
Is it not the share your bread with the hungry,  
and bring the homeless poor into your house,  
when you see the naked, to cover them,  
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?  
Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing shall spring up quickly;  
your vindicator shall go before you,  
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.  
Then you shall call and the Lord will answer;  
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

If you remove the yoke from among you,  
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,  
if you offer your food to the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,  
then your light shall rise in the darkness  
and your gloom be like the noonday.  
The Lord will guide you continually,  
and satisfy our needs in parched places,  
and make your bones strong;  
and you shall be like a watered garden,  
like a spring of water,  
whose waters never fail.  
Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;  
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;  
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,  
the restorer of streets to live in.

If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath,  
from pursuing your own interests on my holy day;  
if you call the Sabbath a delight  
and the holy day of the Lord honorable;  
if you honor it, not going your own ways,

serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs;  
then you shall take delight in the Lord,  
and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth;  
I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Reflection:

**Week Eight: SERVICE**  
**Day Seven**

Matthew 25:31-46

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." Then he will say to those at his left hand, "You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me." Then they also will answer, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?" Then he will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me." And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

*and...*

James 2:14-17

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or a sister is naked and lacks daily food, and if one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

Reflection:

## Week Eight: SERVICE

### Activities for Practicing Service

#### 1. Serve one another now

Find ways to serve your team members in the coming week and at your next meeting. Record here these practical ways you discovered to serve:

#### 2. Celebrate the service of communion

Celebrate communion together, or recall together the last time you celebrated a service of communion together. Discuss: How do you see Christ serving you in this sacrament?

#### 3. Identify what you can give up to serve in this mission

Brainstorm as a team and jot down the expectations or plans you have in regard to lifestyle on your mission trip; list accommodations, means of travel, clothing, meals, recreation, communications, use of electronics (camera equipment, I-pods, phones). Next to each one, note the likely practice of the average person in the community in which you will minister. Then discuss:

- a. How will your lifestyle compare to that of those (with) whom you serve?
- b. What message will your lifestyle convey?
- c. Will your lifestyle be a means of service?
- d. Will your lifestyle point people to the kingdom of Christ?
- e. What non-material sacrifices are you called to make in this mission?
- f. What are you willing to give up in order to bless others in this mission?
- g. What sacrifices might God be calling you to make here at home in your day-to-day life to serve others?

#### 4. Practice service as a team in your home community

Set aside an entire day in which your team serves in your home community. Brainstorm freely – clean up the church camp, work on a Habitat House, lead a worship service at a nursing home, give social service agency volunteers the day off, raise funds for a need that benefits you in no way. Debrief after your day of community service to consider how you applied the lessons heard in the scriptures read for this week.

#### 5. Serve your family, co-workers and classmates

At home, work or school, find some small thing that you may do each day to serve another that you would not have noticed before studying these texts. Make a list in your journal of the acts of service each day, and reflect on the value they have in and for Christ.

#### 6. Reflect on suffering as service

Recall a time when you suffered – endured pain, made a costly sacrifice – in order to help another person. Perhaps you shared a difficult circumstance in order to stand by them. Write this story out in your journal. How did this kind of service affect you, shape you?

What did your suffering mean to the person whom you served? What does Jesus' suffering for you mean to you?

**Week Nine: STEWARDSHIP****Day One**

To be a steward is to be entrusted with something precious that belongs to another. As his disciples, Jesus has entrusted many things to us: life, material goods, spiritual gifts, the gospel itself. Often when we hear the word “stewardship” we think of stewardship season at church and the call to tithe 10% of our income. Sometimes we are prone to think that 10% of our money - and one day a week - belong to God, and the rest is ours. In fact, it is all God’s, given to us to spend to his glory and for his purposes. It is very different to see ourselves as operating wholly within God’s economy, rather than just giving God a cut of all that we think we own privately. This week meditate on the great responsibility and privilege of serving as Christ’s steward in mission.

Luke 12:32-34

“Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, and unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Reflection:



**Week Nine: STEWARDSHIP**  
**Day Two**

Matthew 6:19-24

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ...No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

Reflection:

**Week Nine: STEWARSHIP**  
**Day Three**

Mark 10:21-31

Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!” They were greatly astonished and said to one another, “Then who can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.”

Peter began to say to him, “Look, we have left everything and followed you.” Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age – houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields with persecutions – and in the age to come have eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.

*and...*

Luke 21:1-4

(Jesus) looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty, has put in all she had to live on.”

**Week Nine: STEWARSHIP**  
**Day Four**

Matthew 25:14-30

“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled his accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

Reflection:

**Week Nine: STEWARDSHIP**  
**Day Five**

I Corinthians 12:4-11

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given a manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by the one and same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

Reflection:

**Week Nine: STEWARSHIP**  
**Day Six**

II Timothy 1:11-14

For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him. Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

Reflection:

**Week Nine: STEWARDSHIP**  
**Day Seven**

I Peter 4:7-11

The end of all things is near; therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers. Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gifts each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

Reflection:

## Week Nine: STEWARDSHIP

### Activities for Practicing Stewardship

#### 1. Take Stock

Do these journal activities in prayer, preferably as a group. Take time to pray together, jot thoughts individually, then discuss each question together.

a. List your personal resources – what have you received? Think immaterially and materially, and write a list in a numbered column. Now ask how God might have you use each one for his kingdom. You will not come up with final answers in this sitting, and may not come up with final answers for some of them through much of your life. But, for now, as a way to begin listening, jot down next to each entry any thoughts that come to mind.

b. Now list, in the same manner, the resources that your mission team, and your congregation, have (include the good news!). While all of these are earmarked for the kingdom, which of these might God have you use in this particular mission? Put a check next to those. Prayerfully consider how you will use the resources checked so that God is best glorified and others witness the good news of the gospel most clearly. Jot notes next to each entry.

c. Repeat this exercise after you return home from your trip. Many short-term mission participants feel more grateful for their “personal” wealth after trips, but they do not manage their resources any differently.<sup>216</sup> How will you manage personal and congregational resources differently as a result of your mission experience and growing commitment to God’s mission in the world?

#### 2. Do the Math

As a group: Figure out how much you and your congregation will spend on this mission. Research the average annual income of a person living in the community or country in which you will be serving. How many weeks’, months’, or years’ wages for one family does your proposed budget represent? What kinds of things could a local ministry in that place accomplish with those funds? Prayerfully consider - would God have you send the money, or spend the money on the trip? If God is calling you to go, what kinds of fruit might God bring from this mission that will make it a good and productive investment for the kingdom?

Make four quadrants to fill in as you pray and brainstorm: immediate fruit, long-term fruit; fruit among us and our congregation; fruit with/among those whom we will serve. You will not know all of the answers – only God does at this point, but take some time to look at the larger economic picture and consider what kinds of “returns” from your investment might please God. When you complete this mission, it may be interesting to do this exercise again as a group and recognize what God has done, and begun.

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<sup>216</sup> Robert J. Priest et. al., “Researching the Short-Term Mission Movement,” *Missiology* 34, (October 2006), 440.

### 3. Go Bearing Good Gifts

Is it helpful to your receiver hosts for you to bring gifts? If so, find out what would be most appreciated. Can you bring work materials, or provide the funds to purchase them? Is equipment or curriculum that is available to you needed there? Sometimes it will be important not to go loaded down - and loading others down - with “stuff.” “Stuff” can create problems that you can’t even imagine. However, often church leaders and career missionaries will have a specific wish list for themselves and those to whom they minister with which you can help – computer software, medical equipment, books. It is best to work through leaders in churches and mission agencies in order to bring gifts that are contextually appropriate and useful.

### 4. Pray Over Pocket Money

As a team, talk about personal spending on your trip:

- How much money will you recommend that each person bring for personal use?
- How does that amount compare to the amounts planned for actual expenses, and for gifts and offerings among your hosts?
- If shopping will be a part of your trip, how much time will be devoted to this?
- You may be going to a place where souvenirs and other goods can be purchased for comparatively little. What are ways you can keep the kingdom in view and practice love and justice in the marketplace?
- Consider choosing souvenirs as an individual or group that will continue to encourage you in the mission of the kingdom. Some ideas of items that help deepen understanding or strengthen relationships include a tape or CD of folk or sacred music; a book of poetry or liturgy; children’s story books set in the host culture; a history of the country or church written by a national; worship objects for use in your home congregation - chalice, stole, cross, offering baskets, a musical instrument; items that help you share with your congregation – maps, cloths to hang or drape, items of traditional clothing.

### 5. Celebrate the Gifts of the Spirit

As a team, use a group session to take and discuss a spiritual gifts inventory. Many versions of these are available, and your pastor may recommend one that is particularly well suited to your faith tradition. Pledge to pray and encourage one another – on the trip and at home – in the use of your particular spiritual gifts.

### 6. Raise Mission Participation, Not Just Money

Talk with leaders and members of your congregation and list ways they can participate in the mission: discipleship, prayer, education, funding, worship. Some examples of this kind of partnership:

- The elders lead Bible study with you
- Church members with knowledge provide preparatory instruction on language or construction skills or culture
- The congregation works through a prayer guide for the church or country you are visiting



- Members who have been missionaries with the same host receivers share their experiences and participate in the continuing conversation
- The congregation considers a long-term project with the host receivers in their community or beyond
- You provide education through classes, presentations and newsletter articles about mission, about your host receivers, and about the work of God in another part of the world.

## APPENDIX D

### SYLLABUS FOR A SEMINARY COURSE IN PLANNING AND LEADING SHORT-TERM MISSION TEAMS

**MN438/538 PLANNING AND LEADING SHORT-TERM MISSION TRIPS**

Beth McCaw

Fall, 2006

Office: 208 Severance (589-3390)

Mondays, 4:00-5:00 Severance

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1 credit Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit

**Course Description**

This course prepares students to develop ministries of short-term mission that are theologically grounded, culturally sensitive, tied to the ministry and mission of the wider church, and carried out by participants who are practically and spiritually well prepared. The course can be taken on its own, or as a prerequisite (seminary students) for a two week mission trip in early summer 2007.

**Course Objectives**

Students who complete this course will be able to:

1. Develop short-term mission programs that are shaped by a theology of mission.
2. Describe several models for congregational participation in short-term mission and their strengths and weaknesses.
3. Plan short-term mission trips in relationship with the congregation and wider church.
4. Build, orient, disciple, lead and debrief short-term teams for effective mission.
5. Be familiar with resources for spiritual and practical preparation for short-term mission teams.
6. Make all necessary arrangements for domestic and international trips.

**M.Div. Curricular Goals Fulfilled by This Course**

- Nurture habits and disciplines of study, prayer and reflection that increase their love of God and neighbor and shape their personal and professional lives.
- Evangelize the world with faithfulness and contextual sensitivity.
- Lead and nurture congregations to promote peace and justice in the public arena and encourage the witness and service of the church in mission to the world.
- Integrate theology and practice in all areas of life and ministry.

**Requirements**

1. Regular attendance in class and participation in discussion. (10% of grade)
2. Timely completion of the assigned reading. (10% of grade)
3. Creation of an annotated bibliography of short-term mission resources. (20% of grade)
4. Final project, 5-10 pages: (60% of grade)

- a. For those not participating in the summer trip: Creation and brief presentation of a program of orientation and debriefing for use with a short-term mission team. Elements to be included in the program will be discussed on the first day of class. Some of these elements should be prepared prior to their inclusion in the full program due on the last day of class. Due dates for these are shown on the syllabus.
- b. Option for those participating in a summer trip: Preparation of a piece of the summer trip orientation – to be selected by the third week of class and due on the last day of class; participation in the team orientation during the spring; reflection paper upon return from the trip.

## **Bibliography**

### **Required**

#### Books:

Dearborn, Tim. *Short-Term Missions Workbook*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2003.

Peterson, Roger P., Gordon Aeschliman, and R. Wayne Sneed. *Maximum Impact Short-Term Mission*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: STEM Press, 2003. Selected chapters.

#### Chapters/Articles: (Compiled, available in the Pastor to Students Office)

Adeney, Miriam. "McMissions: Short-Termers Have Their Place, But Not at the Expense of Career Missionaries." *Christianity Today* November 11, 1996: 14-15.

Bonk, Jonathan J. "Mission and the Problem of Affluence." In *Toward the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in Christian Mission*, edited by James M. Phillips and Robert T. Coote, 295-309. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1993.

Jeffrey, Paul. "Beyond Good Intentions," *Christian Century* vol 118: 5-8.

May, Stan. "Short-Term Mission Trips are Great IF...", *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 36, (2000), 444-449.

Slater, Bryan A. "Short-Term Missions: Biblical Considerations," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 36, (2000), 452-457.

Slimbach, Richard. "First, Do No Harm," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 36 (October 2000): 428-441.

*The U.S. Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Mission*

### **Recommended**

Forward, David C. *The Essential Guide to the Short-term mission Trip*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1998.

George, Sherron. *Called as Partners in Christ's Service*. Louisville, Kentucky: Geneva Press, 2004.

*Required reading should be completed before the date on which it is shown as due.*

*Recommended texts are optional; Called as Partners in Christ's Service may be read over the course of the semester. The Essential Guide to Short-term Missions is a useful resource for the final project.*

- Sept. 11**      Class Objectives and Requirements  
**Defining and Describing Short-Term Missions**  
*Biblical foundations for short-term missions; Discerning who, what, when, where, how, why*
- Reading:  
 Peterson et. al. Chapter 2: "Defining 'Mission,'" chapter 8: "Short-term Mission vs. Cross Cultural Trips"  
 Slater, Bryan A. "Short-Term Missions: Biblical Considerations."
- Sept. 18**      **Orientation for Short-Term Mission**  
*Avoiding "mission-lite;" motives and mission statements; building a team and team building; providing holistic preparation; choosing resources for preparation and on-field; team homework*
- Reading:  
 Dearborn, Introduction, chapter 4: "Maximizing Personal Growth"  
 Peterson, et. al., chapter 5: "The Process Trilogy" – 127-138  
 Slimbach, Richard. "First, Do No Harm"
- Sept. 25**      **Worship**  
*Mission as worship, worship as mission; Services of worship – with the home church and host church, among the mission team; commissioning liturgy; songs to sing*
- Reading:  
 Peterson, et. al, chapter 11, "A Contemporary Historical Review"  
 May, Stan. "Short-Term Mission Trips are Great IF..."
- Oct. 2**        **Missional Vocation**  
*Tying mission trips to baptism; exegeting the great commission for short-term mission teams; involving the entire congregation in short-term missions*
- Reading:  
 Peterson, et. al., Introduction, Chapter 1: "God's Fools"  
 Peterson et. al., chapter 4: "Applying Our Definition"

Due: (Option “A” for requirements) One page order of worship, or liturgy for commissioning

**Oct. 9** Reading Week

**Oct. 16** **Prayer**

*Listening for God in mission; praying for the world; means of prayer for the congregation and the mission team; journaling; mission team retreats; immunizations and health concerns*

Reading:

Dearborn, chapter 7: “Staying Spiritually Fresh”

**Oct. 23** **Kingdom-Consciousness**

*Rethinking membership and citizenship; representing the reign of God; holism and hope in short-term missions; passports and travel arrangements*

Reading:

Dearborn, Chapter 1: “The God of Mission”

Due: (Option “A” for requirements) One page outline of a prayer exercise or program for use by a mission team and/or sending congregation.

**Oct. 30** **Bearing Witness**

*Helping missionaries to understand the gospel and articulate their faith; preparing testimonies, lessons and sermons; foreign language considerations*

Reading:

Dearborn, chapter 6: “Communicating Clearly.”

Adeney, Miriam. “McMissions: Short-Termers Have Their Place, But Not

at

the Expense of Career Missionaries.”

**Nov. 6** **Dependency**

*Avoiding the wrong kind of dependency in mission; depending upon the Holy Spirit; being learners and receivers; submissive relationships with hosts and teammates and the church; itineraries and flexibility*

Reading:

Dearborn, chapter 5: “Working Together as a Team”

Peterson et. al., chapter 6: “The Participant Trilogy”

Due: (Option “A” for requirements) One page guide to help missionaries prepare a faith testimony

**Nov. 13**

**Fellowship**

*Relationships, not tasks; partnership and unity in short-term mission; cross-cultural preparation: incarnational practices in short-term mission; on field arrangements; group covenants; conflict resolution*

Reading:

Dearborn, chapters 2: “Learning to Delight in Differences”

Dearborn, chapter 3: “Embracing Change”

Due: (Option “A” for requirements) One page outline for a group study of a Biblical text or theme relevant to the practice of mission

**Nov. 20**

Thanksgiving Break

**Nov. 27**

**Service**

*The self-sacrificial demands of short-term missions; sharing in suffering; the celebration of communion in short-term missions; mission team service in the home community; packing lists*

Reading:

Peterson et. al. Chapter 9: “The MISTM-Grid”

Bonk, Jonathan J. “Mission and the Problem of Affluence.”

Jeffrey, Paul. “Beyond Good Intentions.”

**Dec. 4**

**Stewardship**

*Blessed to be a blessing: short-term mission as stewardship of God’s gifts  
The cost, and the worth, of short-term missions; raising mission participation; identifying spiritual gifts among team members; insurance, release forms and responsibility in risk taking; self-care on the field; gifts and gratitude; avoiding tourism*

Reading:

*The U.S. Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Mission*

**Dec. 11**

**What Next?**

*Pastoring for reentry; reverse culture shock; evaluations; planning for future fruit; sharing the mission with the home church; ongoing relationships and ministry with partners/hosts; vocational next steps*

Reading:

Dearborn. Chapter 8: Preparing to Return Home





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- Borthwick, Paul. *How to Be a World Class Christian*. Waynesboro, Georgia: OM Literature, 1999.
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## VITA

Beth Louise Lindquist McCaw was born on September 14, 1965 in Elmhurst, Illinois, daughter of Robert and Virginia Lindquist. With majors in psychology and English/communication, she graduated from Hope College in 1987, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree. In 1992 she graduated from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary receiving a Master of Divinity degree, with a concentration in pastoral care and counseling. Between 1992 and 1995 Beth and her husband Scott served in Namibia, Africa with the Africa Inland Mission. In 1996 Beth was ordained as Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and then served as associate pastor at Faith Presbyterian Church, Tallahassee, Florida for eight years, during which time this project took shape. Since 2004 she has served as pastor to students at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. This thesis was completed between 2004 and 2007 for a May, 2007 graduation from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in the Doctor of Ministry program